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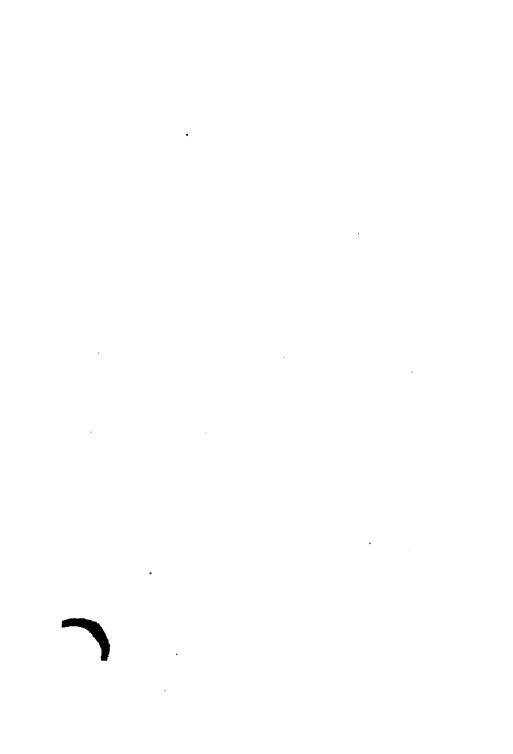
# KING JAZARUS



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# KING LAZARUS.

A Movel.

BY

# LEITH DERWENT,

AUTHOR OF "OUR LADY OF TEARS."

"Wild Spirit, which art moving everywhere, Destroyer and Preserver!"

SHELLEY.

"Oh! breathe not his name, let it sleep in the shade Where cold and unhonoured his relics are laid; Sad, silent, and dark be the tears that we shed ——" MODRE,

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.





LONDON:

RICHARD BENTLEY AND SON, NEW BURLINGTON STREET.

1881.

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251 i. 327.

PRINTED BY WILLIAM CLOWES AND SONS, LIMITED, LONDON AND BECCLES.

# RICHARD GARNETT, Esq.,

WHO HAS INTIMATELY ASSOCIATED HIS NAME

WITH THAT OF SHELLEY,

AND TO WHOM ALL LOVERS OF THE POET OWE A DEBT,

THIS WORK IS INSCRIBED.



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# KING LAZARUS.

## CHAPTER I.

### A LOVE SCENE.

CRUMBLED into half a ruin by the touch of time, and as sleepy as are all these oldworld Languedocian homesteads, Château-Roland lies some ten miles from the town of Uzès, buried among trees and vines, and perched on the summit of a hill that from every side the high mountains overlook. Here, in the year 1704, Roland, the General of the insurgent Camisards, was betrayed by a traitorous lieutenant to a detachment of the troops of Villars. The room is still shown from which the Cevennois hero sprang out, sword in hand, to meet his death. From such an ancestor what should vol. I.

spring but a race of soldiers? The male descendants of the Camisard leader have in almost every generation taken the sword in their hands to carve themselves with it a way through the world, and not seldom have fallen, smitten by its edge. Thev have not been great in the annals of their country, nor fortunate in obtaining high command in her armies; and Henri Roland, who died in the winter of 1864, a colonel in the army of the Second Empire, had risen at least as high as any of his race before He left one son, Louis, who adopted his father's profession, and was in the summer of 1868, when not quite twenty-four years of age, gazetted a captain of Engineers.

Louis Roland had been educated at the Prytanée de la Flèche, and afterwards at the École Polytechnique. They tell strange stories of his school-days at La Flèche—of the mild little grave-eyed Puritan that he was when he came there from his sombre cradle and birthplace, Château-Roland. A brown-haired, blue-eyed, English-looking little fellow glances up at the professor on

the morning when he first appears in class. with the expectation that here, as at home, one prefaces the work of the day with prayer. For a prayer, the professor begins dictating, to the class a theme. All the boys but one fall instantly to writing. new-comer, who felt, perhaps, as if the eyes of God and his mother were upon him, drops to his knees and prays silently—a prayer of a few moments, such as, before grasping his sword and rushing out upon the musketeers of Villars, his heroic ancestor may have offered up. Play-time arrives, and the little Louis, a mark for the dislike and sarcasm of his comrades, is unmercifully thrashed and jeered at. Put a hundred average boys of eleven in such a predicament, and ninety would be conquered by the mockery, and the other ten by the beating. That taciturn, grave-faced little Puritan from the old château in the Cevennes was made of sterner stuff. and scoff at him as they might, when the arrival of the hour for recreation left him daily at their mercy, his companions saw him, morning after morning, drop quietly to his knees. A month or two of persecution, and the spirit of fierce hostility that this indomitable little Daniel had persisted in braving gave way to a feeling of respect; and this singular addition to the *elèves* of the Prytanée was left to say his morning prayer in peace.

For my part, I have to speak of Roland as a man. And if some keen eye should detect under the thin disguise in which I veil a hero a face that looks out at us mournfully from the battle-smoke of yesterday, I can but answer proudly, "With all his faults, I see in him a man."

He was educated, as has been said, for a military life; and with nothing but his talent to push him forward, entered, at a comparatively early age, the Engineers. At four-and-twenty he was a captain, and dissatisfied. Was Napoleon contented, can we suppose, with what fate had done for him at four-and-twenty? And Roland believed himself to be of the stuff from which are hewed Napoleons.

"Ambition démesuré" was the censure that a professor at the École Polytechnique had pronounced on him. In itself, the verdict was perhaps a just one; but it gave but an imperfect view of Roland's character. He loved his country passionately, and his ambition was for France rather than for himself. Danton's strong cry commended itself to him, and he felt that he, too, could at any crisis be ready to declare, "Let my name be blighted, if but France be saved."

Besides this love of his country, he had two other strong feelings of affection—for his parents and his home. His mother, above all, he loved with a fond and tender worship that caused him to regard her lightest wish as sacred, and had made him the most devoted and dutiful of sons. But how would it be, Madame Roland sometimes asked herself, if in the hidden future there should wait a day when to be true to her he must be false to what he regarded as the most sacred of claims on earth? She shuddered at the thought, and prayed God that the day might never come when his

love of her should be weighed in the balance against his love of France.

While Roland was still in very early manhood, his father's death brought, as it were, a great darkness into that sombre old château of the Cevennes. The widow, who found her widowhood the more painful from the fact that Louis could not long be with her, and away from his regiment; and that, in place of this living love, there were around her only mementoes of her dead husband and the walls of the home in which she had been happy with him, forsook, after some months of suffering, the desolate château, and went away to Scotland. had relations there; and, indeed, was herself of Scottish blood and birth, but had married when very young the lover whom she won while on a visit to the south of France.

It came thus to pass, that when she at last returned to her lonely Southern home, and Louis, on the next of his infrequent furloughs, hastened there, the young man, then about twenty-one, found installed as his mother's companion a slight, large-eved girl of thirteen, who called him "Cousin." and Madame Roland "Aunt." This little orphan—for orphan she was—was her sister's only child. She did not make a sunshine in the gloomy place, as a merry, laughing creature of her years might have done; but, though serious and even sad in manner, her tender and grateful love made her, in no long time, dear to those who protected her as a more sparkling and shallow nature could never have been dear. Louis, in especial, began to find, as she advanced to womanhood, that she grew ever more attractive in his eyes.

At seventeen, says Byron, boys learn to look into the faces of the other sex, and find them fair—at seventeen, the only woman's face that Louis Roland's eyes looked fondly upon was that fond one of his mother. The visions of maiden forms and lips of a tempting redness that haunted the imaginations of his comrades had for this young Puritan no more seduction than one may suppose them to have had for

Simeon Stylites, lifted high above temptation on his lonely pillar in the desert. his dreams, Roland saw looking on him the eves, not of a girl, but of his ancestor:furious, as they may have glared when the trapped lion rushed from that room in the old château upon his death, or bright and proud, as they shone when the Camisard leader answered the messenger sent by Marshal Villars to offer pardon and honours if he would surrender, with: "Say to M. le Maréchal that on the day when the King re-establishes the Edict of Nantes, recalls my brethren who are in exile, and sets free those who are in his prisons and on board his galleys, Roland, the General of the Camisards, will sheathe his sword." then the dream would change, and the sleeper would see before him the old home in the Cevennes, and Louis Roland, Consul of the Republic, welcomed by his mother, as was Coriolanus by Volumnia, with-

"I have lived
To see inherited my very wishes"—
and would hear, with passionate emotion,

"Victory! Victory!—A Roland! A Roland!" shouted from every throat in France. What hope was there that a heart already burning with such fire as this, could be further kindled with the flame of love?

And yet, one day when the summer burned about him, and the sun was as a sign of splendour lifted high above the arid hills of the Cevennes, there came into his life a passion of strange thoughts that centred themselves on the orphan who shared his home. He was there on one of the longest of his furloughs, when the love-fit struck him, and drove him, after a strong wrestle with himself, to declare his love.

"Bella," he said, taking the girl's hand one day—they were walking side by side in the garden beneath the terrace of the old château, and the fire of summer was hot above them, and the leafy beauty of June around—"I love you."

She shrank away from him, and tried to withdraw her hand from his. "No, no!" she protested, distressfully. "Oh, Louis, I am too young yet to be spoken to of love!"

"My darling," he said, looking at her tenderly, "only let me have the hope that I may some day win you, and I can bear to wait."

For all answer, she covered her face with her hands, and burst into sudden tears.

"Have I been too sudden?" he asked her, while his hand tried once more to clasp hers. "I am rough and soldierlike, Bella—forgive me, if my manner of telling a woman I love her is not that she would read of in books, or meet with from most men. I have no talent in the direction of making pretty speeches. Tell me that you forgive me, and that I may lead you in to my mother and say, 'Mother, this is my promised wife.'"

"No, no!" she answered, with the same vehemence as before. "I am your sister, Louis—always your sister—don't ask me to be anything more."

"Ah!" he said, with sudden jealousy, "you love another, do you not?"

She lifted her head, and looked him fearlessly in the face, though with tear-wet eyes. "And where should I have met the other that I could give my heart to? You have no right, Louis, to say such things to me; but I tell you this, and you may take it in what spirit you will—I care for no man in the world as I care for you, and you I love only as a brother."

"But I may teach you one day," he said eagerly, "to let me be something more to you."

She shook her head, and laid her hand frankly in his. "Let us be brother and sister, Louis, as we have always been."

"No," he said doggedly, and turning from her as he spoke, "we must be less or more."

And so, without another word, but with gloomy looks on his side, and a pained spirit on hers, the pair returned towards the house.

It might have been a week after this incident, and when her son was about to depart to resume his duties with the army, that Madame Roland, coming softly on him where he stood in the sunshine with his

eyes bent absently on the prospect before him, and his thoughts far away from those hills on which he gazed, laid her hand very quietly on his shoulder—"Louis," she said, "I want to know if you have a secret from me."

Roland started, and turned. "My dearest mother," he said, when he had kissed the hand that thus tenderly called him from his reverie, "what secrets should I have?"

The fond face before him smiled on him. "I have given you some of my Scottish ways, Louis, along with the Scotch blood that you inherit from me, and among them that of answering one question with another. What secrets? Why one, perhaps, that would give me pleasure if you told it to me. Are you not in love with Isabel?"

"With Isabel?" The young man's face flushed as he repeated the words, and he turned his head aside. "Why do you say this to me, mother?" he asked, after a moment's pause.

"But tell me first what you say, Louis, to my question. Is it really possible that

you are learning to find something more than a sister in her? It would be the happiest day of my old age that saw you two engaged."

- "Your old age, maman! You must learn to look a little less like a girl of five-and-twenty before you talk of age. But, if you want an answer to your question, my dearest mother, Isabel and I are not engaged, or likely to be."
- "And I, who had thought that I saw the signs of something like love springing up between you!" said Madame Roland, disappointed. "Is she not to your taste, then, Louis? I know that, strictly speaking, she is not handsome; but to those who know her as you do, she ought to be very attractive."
- "She is attractive to me," Roland answered shortly.
- "And you have thoughts of asking her to marry you?"
- "None at present, mother. Nothing is farther than marriage from my thoughts."
  - "But if she loves you, and you her? It

is the one dream of my life now, that you and she should be left all in all to each other when I am gone."

- "Mother," said Roland suddenly, "I will promise you this, at least—if I ever ask any woman to marry me, that woman shall be Isabel."
- "And when? When will you ask her, Louis?"

"Ah! when?" said Roland, with a strange, forced laugh. "When I am a Marshal of France, perhaps, and can bring a bald head and plenty of gold lace to back my suit. But this I promise you, mother, that one day I will ask her; only it must be left to the future and me to determine when."

And with this promise—not knowing what had passed already—Madame Roland was forced to be content. She let her son go back, without further speech passing between them on the subject, to his military duties in a Norman garrison; and the two women, aunt and niece, were left lonely through the rest of that long, parching summer in the old château of the Cevennes.

If in Isabel's girlhood there was something dreamy, and she had an almost nunlike stillness of aspect, what better excuse could be offered for her seriousness and stillness than those long, hot summers and sombre winters that she passed within the walls of Château-Roland. It was not a world that lay around her, but an eternal barrier from the world and the life of men, on which a southern sun beat fiercely, and to which was given by the few tenants of this region the name of the Cevennes. walked out sometimes in the long, hot days of summer, and after straying for half the day among the hills returned without having looked on a human face. And if in this solitude she had learned to dream, must not Cain himself, if he had shared it with her, have learned also to wander back in fancy into the happiness of the past, and to create for himself a world in which Murder had no share? Or would the silence of the hills have soothed him into peace?

Those eyes that have never looked on a more southern sun than that of London or

Paris, know little of the aspect that summer bears in the Cevennes. Of a July noontide, the silence of those mountains becomes more oppressive than the loudest roar of London. Out of a heaven without a cloud, the sun, an eye of fire, looks with a glance that not even the strong orbs of the eagle would cherish any longing to encounter. Resting in the shelter of some lime or olive tree, and listening in vain for the murmur of a breeze among the leaves above him, the traveller in no long time feels steal upon him a sympathy with the drowsiness of Nature; and presently a stray lizard, gliding past him in its search for food, may find him with his head declined upon the earth and sharing in the slumber of the hills. The gray châteaux, when, tired and hot, one steals into their shady courtyards in search of rest, lie silent all of them as graves. For aught of life that is seen to stir within their old-world precincts, their last inhabitants might have been slaughtered some two centuries ago in the persecution of the Camisards. You have wandered out

of France into the past. Dreamland and the Cevennes begin to seem to you convertible terms; and looking round upon lonely hill-side and secluded valley, you half believe that the only dwellers in this land are shadows, and that they have taken Morpheus for their god.

In this land of dreams Isabel for some five years now had dwelt and dreamed. She had dreamed of love; not of such love as fate had flung in her way—the love of a soldier -but of mating-she who had something of the eagle in her—with a spirit that should have in it both lion and dove. Had Roland been a poet and soldier, he might have won her; but being soldier only, and of a hard, cold nature, her fancies, the strange, sweet, secret fancies that she cherished, shrank timorously away from him, and refused to twine themselves about this piece of living rock. And so the summer in which he had vainly asked her to be his wife wore away at last, and winter came again to the old château of the Cevennes, and found the girl still lonely there—devoted as ever to her

aunt, and tireless in ministering to one over whose life there began to steal a shadow of ill-health; but with restless flutterings of soul, as of a bird long caged, and vaguely expectant of something—she knew not what—that the future should bring forth.

# CHAPTER II.

### WASTWATER.

THE frosts of a thousand winters have scarred Scawfell since that mountain and his brother-giants, Great Gavel, Kirkfell and the Pillar, first saw human ants at work creating dwellings for themselves in the dales about Wastwater. A house the more with each new century that increases the burden of years already crushing the back of Father Time would seem to have been, as nearly as possible, the rate at which the slow-paced insects have piled into buildings the stones that cumber so abundantly the earth of this sterile region. By more than one sheet of water to which Nature has given a beauty yet more sombre than that of this gloomy Cumbrian lake, and

at the foot of peaks that can scowl more blackly than ever did Scawfell when storms were chafing him, cities have been founded. and mankind have multiplied exceedingly. Wastwater, however, alike heedless of the ancient walls that look down into the shining blue of Swiss lakes, and of the mushroom Babylons for ever springing up beside the mighty inland waters of America, is as bare in these latter Victorian days of any semblance of a town, as ever it was when subjects of King Alfred hunted the wolf in neighbouring forests. At its seaward and tamer end dwellings numerous enough to deserve in some sort the name of village have, indeed, banded themselves together; but where the outlying slopes of Scawfell sweep down towards the lake, and a steep and grassy valley climbs like a wave to the foot of the grey Pillar, human encroachments upon the divided sovereignty of mere and rock have been so trifling, that the eye all but fails to notice a few specks that dot, like anchored barks, the sea of prospectspecks that grow on approaching them

more nearly into dwellings, more rude and time-worn than the hills themselves.

In these hermit homesteads glide away. as quietly as the years, some score or so of the most uneventful lives in Britain. quiet hamlet owns no street, is guiltless of the bustle of shopkeeping, never shook to the rumble of an approaching train, nor saw its few roofs spanned by telegraph wires; and has, on the whole, as little portion in the nineteenth century and its works, as if Wastwater civilization had been at a standstill since the days of the earlier A church—the smallest house of Georges. prayer in England—that amply provides for the religious wants of the community by seating as many as fourteen persons; and a homely little inn that might, at a pinch, find beds for a quintet of travellers, are the most noticeable additions to the hamlet of Wastdale Head that have been made since the ever-memorable day-late in the reign of Elizabeth-when the first faint rumours of the Reformation penetrated to the incredulous dalesmen. Had Rip Van

Winkle fallen asleep in the mountains hereabout, that worthy, on waking from his famous after-dinner nap, could but have given a drowsy glance to the valley beneath him, and finding all things as he left them, have turned on his side, and dozed on as peacefully as Wastdale Head for a generation more.

About the period when the nineteenth century was a Time-infant of a few years old, feet familiar with the dust of cities first began to find a way across the mountains to the grass of Wastdale. How the pioneer tourist was received by the aborigines, tradition saith not; but from the present character of the dalesmen, it must needs have been with a mixture of hospitality and indifference. In process of years the number of such intruders multiplied; and as tourists—who are in all things else the reverse of angels—ceased to resemble them in the particular of their visits, the Wastdale aborigines woke slowly to the perception that a busy and thickly-populated world lay beyond the circle of their hills.

An appetite for news from the distant and enigmatical region was naturally, and-for Wastwater — rapidly developed. It is credibly conjectured (for so much more swiftly than of old did information now begin to travel) that Wastdale Head had heard of the victory of Waterloo within a twelvementh of its being won; and Victoria had been but a year or two upon the throne when (or so, at least, the present generation of dalesmen assert) misgivings began to trouble the minds of the more speculative among her subjects in this valley born, that at last the reign of George III. was ended. Early in the golden era of Victoria, too, the Wastdale aborigines are believed to have first looked—with what emotions cannot be told—upon a copy of the Times. The great photograph of the daily-changing face of Time was found one August in a farmhouse — the disquieting legacy of a thankless Londoner to an Eden where his over-busy brain had been soothed into rest; —and was gazed on in turn by each of the dalesmen in the long evenings of the following winter. Before another harvest had been gathered in, the hamlet had developed a disposition to depart from the traditions of its forefathers. A schoolmaster was—with some natural fear and trembling, it is true—added to the population of Wast-dale Head; and the half-dozen heads of families who had become his patrons covenanted to repay him for his labours by clothing him at the joint expense, and boarding him in turns.

Since the date of this memorable innovation, the greatest ever known in Wastdale, the march of intellect has progressed, on the whole, with giant strides. The population are believed to be divided into Liberals and Conservatives; there are three Dissenters, and a sceptic of deistical tendencies, who has pushed his researches into the novelties of free-thought to such lengths as to have become familiar as a household word with the name of Hume. As for the younger sheep of the Wastdale fold, their draughts at the Pierian spring are daring to an extent almost calculated to make

their forefathers start in horror from the graves wherein they sleep a sleep untroubled by an epitaph. Of the four marriageable spinsters reported by the last census to exist in Wastdale, it is believed that two (some say even a third) understand very well the meaning of the word "novel;" and still more recently a tourist, whom the Huntsman had been unable to receive, discovered in the farm-house that hospitably gave him quarters, a tattered copy of Marryatt's "Mr. Midshipman Easy," and learned from his farmer-host that the youngest son of the family, a boy of fifteen, was then at sea. There is still peacedeep peace—in the outward aspect of Wastdale Head; but even into this lonely paradise those serpents, "the three R's," have crawled, whispering temptations; and dalesmen have plucked the printed leaves of the tree of knowledge, and devoured them; and mental unrest—the curse that came upon Adam—preys on his descendants that dwell in the shadow of Scawfell.

The moon was shining softly on lake and rock—shining with something of the melancholy beauty that, when earth and earth's satellite were three centuries younger, caught the eye of Philip Sydney, and charmed from him that most exquisite of greetings with which ever votary accosted Dian:—

"With how sad steps, O moon, thou climb'st the skies,

How silently, and with how wan a face!"

Lord Ralston, standing in the doorway of his homely Cumbrian inn, and turning his eyes to the cold gleam that the clouds from moment to moment struggled to obscure, found in the sad, white face of the goddess Luna something sadder and more wan than even the dreary gaze that gentle Philip Sydney half rebuked. "Is that a moon, or the ghost of one?" he muttered to himself. "How white a dead man's face would look by a light like this!"

He stepped out into the wheel-torn track before the inn, where the rain that had pelted down an hour or two before lay shining in rut and hollow, and paused for a moment, listening keenly. "Yes," he said to himself, with a rather more deeply-drawn breath than common; "they're coming. I shall know in a minute now if it's a dead man or a living one that Ritson's bringing me. One—three—seven of them in the party, eh? Ritson's fellows and the three that went up before them must have met."

The dalesmen of whom he spoke came slowly forward—the landlord of the Huntsman heading them. "I ha' fand 'un," Ritson called out, as his quick eye caught sight of the figure in the shadow. "Yo might ha' knawed, my lord, that owd Chris wur t' tyke to track a Lunnoner on Fell."

Ralston drew a quick breath of relief. "Is he hurt?" he asked, catching sight of a man whom two others were supporting.

"Nay, I think na. He's mazed loike i' t' head, an',"—flinging the light of a lantern as he spoke on the drenched figure beside him,—"'a's more loiken a raven reduced i' circumstances or a draggle-tailed pie nor

t' Lunnon peacock as 'a mun ha' been afore yo had gotten 'un decoyed up Pike; but 'a 's noan mich hurt."

"Brandy," put in quickly the object of these comments, "some brandy and a good night's rest will be all I'll want."

"Well, then," said Ralston, turning, "let us in and get these wants of yours attended to. On my soul, Dallas, I felt it shabby to leave you where I did; but what was I to do? I couldn't exactly put you on my shoulders, you know, and carry you down into Wastdale, in the style of the pet lamb in Wordsworth's ballad. Besides, it's more the devil's business than mine, Tom, to look after such a black sheep as you are."

The party entered, and pressed down a dark and narrow passage, Ralston leading. "Curse the step!" he broke out, missing his footing on a threshold slippery with age, and stumbling noisily into the room before him. "The deuce only knows, Chris, why you keep this trap for travellers' tempers on your premises yet. I've broken my shins and the third commandment over the cursed

thing more times in these last few hours than I should like to count."

Ritson chuckled grimly. "'Tis t' proof I keep for t' temperance lads o' how sober we be i' Wastdale," he observed. "Yo might search for half o' t' threescore an' ten years as t' Scriptures gi' us, my lord, or yo fand a knawing bird o' a Lunnon publican wi's doorway loike yon."

"Or with windows one can't see through, Chris," his lordship said, seating himself; "or with fittings-up that look as if they were some stray traps Noah had sold by auction a day or two after he left the ark. You don't take any water in your brandy, I see, Tom," he observed pleasantly, addressing a shivering figure seated by the fire. "Had enough of aqua pura, I suppose, to prejudice you against the element for a month or two to come."

Dallas eyed him languidly. "You certainly let me in for a regular deluge of it," he replied. "I don't think it was quite the thing to cut off from a fellow in the way you did."

- "What, you call it deserting you, I suppose?"
- "You seemed in a deuced hurry to get off, at least."
- "I was—and reason too, I think, when the night was coming on, and a storm with it; and one was thirty-four hundred feet or so above the level of the sea. Besides, if I hadn't left you, who was to have got you down? I couldn't carry you, as I remarked just now; and though they say the devil looks after his own, and this is just the sort of night for him to be abroad in, I doubt if he'd have helped you much. I'll be judged by Ritson, if I didn't take the wisest course."
- "Nay, I'se judge noan," replied the individual referred to.
- "On my word, Chris, that's what I call ungrateful of you; and to me, too, who have just set you up for life in the character of the Good Samaritan. Was there ever an innkeeper like him, Dallas?—one who would go out in the worst of all that ever was vile in the way of weather in search of unlucky

Londoners when their rascally companions leave them fallen among the rocks, and bring the poor wretches to his inn, and pour brandy into them, instead of oil and wine. But you don't look half so forlorn as you did ten minutes ago, Tom—the brandy's bringing you round, I see."

"It's the only stuff that ever puts life into me," said Dallas, finishing another glass.

"It takes it out of you, too, I think," said Ralston, eyeing him curiously. "If you had pitched that pocket-flask of yours to the deuce when I recommended you, I don't think you would have given in deadbeat on the top of a mole-hill like Scawfell."

"Mole-hill, do you call it? I'll stick to Hampstead for the future," said the other, lazily.

"Yes, stick to it," said Ralston, laughing. "Stick to it, and to London and Paris, and all the good things provided for you in this life, as long as they'll stick to you. You can appreciate petits soupers,

and the sparkle of a bright eye over a giass of champagne, Tom; but I doubt if you'll ever quite appreciate the Cumbrian hills."

"Deuce take the day I ever tried to!" said the other, with considerable energy. "I'll thank Mrs. Landlady, however, for the present to light me to my room, and leave me to change my clothes. And if, by the time I come back, her husband there—confound him! is he listening to me?—will have supper ready and a tumbler of stiff grog, they'll fortify me against the effects of the drenching I've had better than any small-beer jokes."

He disappeared as he spoke, and Lord Ralston turned to Ritson. "Where did you find him, Chris?" he asked. "Was it where I left him—among the stones on the top of Scawfell Pike?"

"Con see him noo, I con," said the burly dalesman, with his jolly laugh. "We'd gotten amaist to top o' Pike—owd Lowther, an' myseln, an' Clifford's Jim—when I seed a lantern moving among t' stanes, an' I knawed 'twur Jo Cowperthwaite an' t' twa

as went oop wi' 'un. 'Hast fand him, Jo?' I calls. 'Nay, nay,' says Jo, 't' lad's na here—I'se feared 'a 's fa'n down Mickledore,' he says. 'What 'ull tha bet on that?' I asks 'un. 'Nay,' says Jo, wi's Methody twang, 'I'se bet nowt,' he says, 'on t' loife o' a fellow-creetur.' 'Tha 'rt reet.' I tells 'un, 'tha 'dst lose thy brass, owd lad, as sure as my name's Chris Ritson.' For I minded as t'rain had begun a fair half-hour afore 'twur dark, an' I had my notion o' where t' Lunnoner 'ud run for shelter. An' then I taks t' lantern from Clifford's Jim, an' says, 'Wait tha here a bit, Jo: an' it's loike I'se bring 'un to you.' 'Nay,' Jo answers, 'we'se go together. Lead tha t' rooad,' he says to me---'"

"And you led it, I suppose, and found him?"

"A couple o' hundred yards an' more fra' top o' Pike, i' t' vary direction I'd thowt on. 'Ista here, lad?' I cried, when we wur close on spot. At first, nobbut t' wind answer 't; an' I wur half o' t' mind to think as Jo wur reet, an' t' Lunnoner had vol. 1.

brak's neck on t' dangerous part o' Pike. 'Ista here?' I says, walking a bit farther. 'Hist!' says Clifford's Jim to me, 'I hear 'un.' An' I listened, an' theer wur a voice as faint amaist as t' squeak o' a rat when a tarrier's shaking it. 'Help!' it said, 'help!—I'se here—I'se deeing!'" Ritson mimicked, as nearly as he could, the tone of the supplication that had reached him; and the young peer acknowledged his appreciation of the imitation by an involuntary laugh.

"Dying!" he said. "Confound him for a humbug!"

"Nay, 'a had noan so mich breath i's carcase when we fand him. 'Dom't,' says I, when I turned t' lantern on 'un, 'but tha Lunnoners beats aw!' Theer 'a wur, ligging down atween t' stanes, wi' his smashed billycock for a pillow, t' skirts o' his overcoat flap-flapping i' t' wind like fins, t' trousers sticking to his legs, an' t' tips o' his thin Lunnon boots aw shiny wi' t' rain. 'What's takken yo, mon?' I asks 'un. 'Con yo speak?' So, when 'a 'd gi'n

a gurgle or two 'i t' throat, he fand 'un's voice, an' asked for brandy. I'd a sup o' t' reet thing wi' me i' a flask; an' as soon as t' lads had lifted 'un on 's legs, I gi'd it to him. T' stuff seemed to put life i' 'un; an' when 'a had dom't t' mountains for a bit, some o' us tukken each an arm o' 'un, an' some t' lanterns, an' we started to mak oor way off Pike——''

"And you made it, Chris, or I wouldn't see you here. Confound you, man, you've a talent for long stories!"

"I made 'un, as yo say, my lord, but a varry bonny job it wur—t' maist ticklish job I've had for years, whereivver t' fell wur steep, to get t' Lunnoner down."

"What, was all Tom's courage gone?"

"Nay, I'se say nowt o' un's courage; but t' loife wur nearly oot o' un. Yo breed bouny weaklings o' men in Lunnon, if yon's a spaccimen o' 'em."

"Yes, Tom's a pretty fair specimen as Londoners go—at least, Londoners in his Position and with his physique. He has fair pluck, and no muscle—a girl's stamina,

and the habits—well, the habits of a young fellow of two and twenty who has never earned a day's bread in his life, and never will. You and I, Chris, are men of another build."

"Ay," said Ritson, grimly, as he contrasted his stalwart form with Ralston's slighter one; "but i' your lordship's case theer wur less bone an' muscle than in mine to build on, it seems. But yo're varry welcome back to Wastdale, my lord, after the time yo ha' been away from us among t' cannibal Indians o' t' West. Yo tuk a gey queer road into t' dale, though; an' t' queerest part o' it wur that yo should ha' brought a Lunnoner over Pike."

"Yes, Scawfell Pike early in April doesn't suit Tom's breath and temper. He had lost them both before he got to the top; and when we were fairly there, and I showed him the short cut into Wastdale, he pitched himself down on some moss—you know the stuff that grows there—and swore he'd be hanged if he'd risk his neck among such rocks. 'My dear fellow,' I

couldn't help telling him, 'an accident to you here might be the means of cheating Calcraft of a job.' However, he wouldn't listen to me; and as I found him dead beat, and bent on staying where he was, I came off alone at last, and promised to send him help when I got to Wastdale."

"An' yo sent Jo Cowperthwaite. You'd no notion at first o' asking owd Chris Ritson. Did yo think, my lord, t' owd man's muscles wur grown ower stiff for t' fell?"

"Not I, old lad. I know you to be worth two of a younger man yet. You're like ancient Rome, 'majestic in decay.' No, no, Chris, believe me, I appreciate your merits."

"I'd appreciate his supper better," said Dallas, who re-entered the room in time to catch these words. "Is it coming—or must I content myself with the appetite for it that this affair has given me?"

Ritson's answer was soon forthcoming; and the two young men were left alone to an excellent, if homely meal. When it

was ended. Dallas drew his chair close to the fire that crackled on the hearth of their sitting-room—the best of the half-dozen dark, low-ceiled chambers of the Huntsman -and, lighting a cigar, stretched himself out to bask luxuriously in the blaze. "After all," he observed, philosophically, "there's a certain novelty in a day spent as this has been. I'll never climb a mountain again, as long as I live, but there's a something to look back upon in having been once in one's life a few thousand feet above the level of the sea. But what should make me take into my head the freak of coming here with you, I can't imagine. I'm not like you, Ralston—I haven't any arrière pensée towards a certain little mountain daisy, that I left two years ago a mere bud, and hope to find developed now into a flower that may tempt one to pluck it."

Ralston, across the smoke-wreaths of his companion-cigar, looked savagely at the sneering face of the speaker. "You have dropped that suggestion more than once

since we left London," he said. "Do you think, then, that I'm a scoundrel—that I can't remember, however pretty this girl may have grown—and I confess I expect to find her developed into something charming—that she's a lady by birth, if a trifle rustic in breeding, and the granddaughter of my old tutor?"

"Oh, I know the sex are saints to you," said Dallas cynically. "You've passed your life in worshipping 'em."

"I'm not a cad, at least," the other answered angrily. "Calida juventus may have been as mad a time with me as with most men of my rank and means; but it never tempted me into playing the part of a scoundrel, and I don't see why I should begin now, when I am on the threshold of middle age. And if I had come down here, Tom, to attempt this rascality that you chuckle over the prospect of my committing, I should certainly not have brought you with me."

"You think that I might cut you out, perhaps."

"I should not have wanted a witness to the action, at least. I'd prefer burying so remarkably mean a piece of scoundrelism in as deep a secrecy as I could."

"In an ormolu boudoir of the Quartier Breda? That's about the secrecy I should expect from you," said Dallas lazily. "Take my advice, Ralston; and if you really don't wish that this little girl should figure in what a censorious world would call the list of your victims, don't go near her. Let us leave Wastdale the first thing to-morrow."

Lord Ralston smoked for a while in moody silence. "I'll think of it, Tom," he said at last. "I'll let you know what I think of it when I see you in the morning."

"Well, good-night," said the other, rising and yawning. "I'm done up, and if I'm to strike my tent in the morning, the best thing I can do is to get some rest to-night. Adieu! Saint George, I leave you to your battle with the dragon of temptation. You'll soon have two other

dragons on your hands, if you decide to stop in Wastdale, and their names will be Time and Opportunity. So, au revoir, and pleasant dreams."

## CHAPTER III.

## DAISY.

THE marvellous singer on whom we of these latter years look back as on a god, the torch-like spirit that while still but newly kindled was quenched in the waters of the sea, has discoursed to us in a voice of subtle music of the vision that dawned upon his soul's soul of an Eden and an Eve who tended it.

"I doubt not the flowers of that garden sweet Rejoiced in the sound of her gentle feet,"

says Shelley of that fairest creature, in whose death the sensitive plant died also; and with it many a lily, and rose, and hyacinth, as sweet as the verse that tells of them. If the divine regard of the poet pierced of a verity into the secrets of

Nature—he being of the very few to whom God has given another eye than the common one of man;—and in every flower there dwells a sense of joy and sorrow, how must the blossoms of that little Wastdale garden have rejoiced in the presence of Margaret.

She was eighteen in this very month of April that saw her flitting, sunbeam-like, among her pale, pure primroses and coy violets, her budding lilies and drooping tulips, crocuses and daffodils; and since that winter after her tenth birthday, in which the death of a widowed mother left three orphans to the charge of their father's father, Margaret Clifford had adopted the tiny piece of neglected garden-ground as a sister and a playmate. It is not every annual, even of the varieties classed by English gardeners as hardy, that will thrive in the shadow of Scawfell; but this little nook was fairly sheltered, and of a better soil than much of the ground in Wastdale; and by the time that the girl herself was budding into womanhood, the garden she

took such pleasure in had for years been accustomed to welcome the return of summer with a sunny laugh of flowers.

"As charming a sight in its way as its little mistress is in hers," said to himself an early visitor to the tiny paradise. Ralston had risen, while his late travellingcompanion was still sleeping the sleep of exhaustion at the Huntsman; and he now pushed back the quaint, rustic-looking gate, and stepped softly in upon the grass. A box-tree, cut into the likeness of a ship. the single thing in the place that was trim or artificial, lifted itself between him and the only other tenant of the garden; and near the slender, dark-green masts there waved a ripple of golden hair, kissed at that moment by an amorous sunbeam. Ralston stepped up to the leafy vessel, and leaned upon it.

"'No flower that blows
Is like——'

Good morning, Miss Daisy," he said gallantly.

She turned, as a startled kitten might

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have done, and flashed a wondering glance at the intruder.

"Don't you know me?" he said, smiling, and holding out a hand to her across the fast-anchored bark that separated them. "The little lady that used to declare I should be her husband to forget me in two short twelvemenths! Frailty, thy name is Daisy."

A faint blush came into the girl's cheeks, and the eyes that were looking at him dropped shyly. "Did I ever say that I would be your wife, Lord Ralston? That must have been when I was a very little girl," she answered.

"A daisy of twelve, Miss Clifford. Not so tall a flower by some inches as you are at present, but even then you were a very pretty one. And so you had quite forgotten me?"

She had broken off a sprig of box from the tree before her, and was pulling it to pieces as she answered. "I knew you when I looked at you a second time," she said. "You have changed a great deal in the two years that you have been away. How brown you are, my lord! and your beard, too—what a strange, eastern-looking beard you have grown!"

- "Who made you a critic in beards, Miss Daisy? I can tell you out in California mine was looked on as rather an ornament."
- "It looks as if there ought to be a turban with it. And you have been all the way to California, do you say? Did you kill any Indians there, or grizzly bears?"
- "Both bears and Indians, I assure you. One of the bears gave me rather a nasty scratch in a tussle I had with him; and an Indian——" He pushed back his hair, and showed her a bullet-scar upon the temple. "There, that was what the Indian did," he said.
- "And you killed him, do you say, for wounding you?"
- "We had a shot at each other among some trees. His bullet scratched me, as you see, but mine went through his brain."
  - "Oh, horrid!" She shuddered, and leant

for support against the box-tree that rose between them. "How can you talk so carelessly of such dreadful things! It almost turns me faint to think of them."

"The daisy of Wastdale Head—the hardiest bred flower in Britain—talk of turning faint! Upon my word, Miss Clifford, one might fancy you were a little London school-girl."

"I'm little, I assure you, if I'm not a school-girl." She tripped round the intervening box-tree, and stood full before him. "See what a little thing I am, Lord Ralston! I hardly reach your shoulder."

"And yet I'm but of the average stature of the *genus homo*. Five feet eight and a half I think my height is."

He was thinking, as he spoke, that something more than the average beauty of girlhood stood there before him in the morning sunlight. Deep blue eyes, large and tender and dreamy; a complexion of snow, tinted with just that happy blush of crimson the evening kiss of the sun calls into the whiteness of an Alpine glacier;

red lips, pouting out as if to welcome kisses; a shapely head, a soft, full throatthis vision to which the sun and the blue morning sky seemed shining welcome, might have been Psyche lighted upon English ground in her search for Cupid. Resting upon her, the eye forgot the smallness of her figure in its perfect symmetry. womanly to be held a child, her bright hair, that rippled wave-like over neck and shoulder, her swiftness of movement, and beautiful, joyous face, glancing out archly from the golden mist that haloed it, made up a picture too child-like for Daisy Clifford to be thought a woman. With even such a foot as hers might Titania have brushed the dew from grass and violet; with such a look, half-wistful, half-coquettish, innocent were it not for the wicked something that lurked in lip and eye, have lifted herself from her couch of flowers, and whispered to her fairy spouse-" My Oberon!"

How long the two stood face to face that April morning, Ralston, when they turned at last towards the farmhouse, would have

found it impossible to have said. A delicious sense, familiar to him from of old, but ever welcome, had trembled suddenly into his being—a vague something that gave greater brightness to the sun and a fresher beauty to flower and grass. He had spoken, and she had answered; eve had met eve, and voice alternated with voice; but only the language of her glance remained with him; that of her lips seemed to have been heard as faintly, and remembered as imperfectly, as though it had been a scarce audible murmur reaching him from lips almost too distant for their confused accents to be separated by the ear of the listener into words. Look where he might, her face was ever before him; it seemed to him that when night was come the sweet vision would still shine upon him in his dreams.

A sunbeam twinkling in and out of the old-fashioned farmhouse might have been as expeditious, but could scarcely have looked so bright, or put the finishing touches to the preparations that the old servant was making for breakfast so gracefully as Daisy.

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As her pretty arrangements were being perfected, there came trampling into the breakfast-parlour in heavy boots a tall, fresh-faced young fellow, six or seven years her senior, whom she welcomed with a sisterly kiss, and who bowed with a rather awkward air to Ralston.

- "Good-morning, Lord Ralston. Have you been long in England?" he said, by way of greeting.
- "What, Clifford," said the other, goodhumouredly, "and are you turned so proud that you won't shake hands?" He held his own out as he spoke; and Clifford grasped it cordially.
- "I'm glad, my lord, that your lordship has a memory for old times," he said.
- "Was it because you thought his lordship had forgotten them, that you slipped away from him last night, outside the Huntsman? Would you believe it, Miss Daisy, this brother of yours, after going up the Pike with old Chris and some other Samaritans, and bringing down my friend, Tom Dallas, whom I had left there—by-

the-by, I expect Dallas will be round here presently—positively went off without showing me his face."

"Oh, Jim!" said Daisy, laughing.

"And now he's as shy of offering his hand as last night he was of giving me his company. Is it the vagabond life I have been leading across the Atlantic that makes him look down on me, I wonder?"

Clifford, though he laughed slightly, looked as if he were in some way ill at ease. He had been glancing searchingly from Lord Ralston to his sister, and that which he seemed to read in the two faces dissatisfied him. "Where's grandfather, Daisy?" he said abruptly. "I hope, Lord Ralston, you'll stay to breakfast?"

"If there's room at the breakfast-table for me—and your sister declares there is—I'll be happy to inflict my company upon you."

"Room and welcome both; and for Sir Thomas, if he likes to join us. Shall I send a message to the Huntsman?" the young man asked.

- "Not in the least necessary," said Ralston carelessly. "Dallas will be here to look for me presently; and you can ask him to stay, if you like."
- "As you please, my lord," the young man answered. "Where's grandfather, Daisy?" he asked again.
- "Where should he be but in his room?" said Daisy pettishly. "Really, Jim, you are very impatient."
- "Will you call him down? Tell him we have two guests to breakfast."
- "Only one as yet," said Daisy; "and you don't know but Sir Thomas may stay at the Huntsman. Oh, no, there he comes, looking as if last night had made an old man of him. See what a tired-looking baronet, Lord Ralston." She flashed a bright little glance at Ralston as she spoke, and flitted from the room.
- "Is your grandfather still as hearty as ever?" Lord Ralston asked her brother. "Still the Patriarch of the Pillar?"
- "I wish that cursed rock were sunk in the deepest waters of the sea! Yes, my

lord," said Clifford; "he's still much what he was when you saw him last. Every first of May he sets off at six in the morning to climb the Pillar. He'll end by dashing out his brains upon it. It's madness at his age to venture on such feats."

"Madness, indeed," assented Ralston.

"And can't you or your sister do something to bring him to his senses?"

"Daisy might, I think, if she would try; for she's the apple of his eye, and he's even fonder of her than of being called the Patriarch of the Pillar. But she's such a butterfly of a thing—she doesn't seem to understand what danger he runs. As for me, I'm nothing to him. If I say anything, he laughs at me."

"Can't you get him to see that every time he sets out to climb the Pillar he runs an increasing risk of a broken neck?"

"He knows it; and it's the very death he covets. Only the other morning, he told me that he'd rather end his days on the Pillar than in the softest bed in Christendom. Hush! that's his step we hear," said Clifford, drawing off.

When a patriarch of fourscore and a youth of two-and-twenty enter a room, it approaches to a certainty that the step of the older man will be the feebler of the two. The pair who now appeared almost at the same moment in the doorway of this Wastbreakfast-parlour were dale remarkable exceptions to the rule. Old Anthony Clifford, bright-eyed and ruddy-looking, his white hair clustered plentifully around his massive head, walked in with a step as vigorous as his aspect; and after nodding to his grandson, and shaking hands briskly with Lord Ralston, seated himself at table, as hale an octogenarian as ever in walking disdained the assistance of a stick. Dallas. slight and pale, and but half recovered from his last night's fatigue, lounged languidly in, and exchanged greetings with the four who waited for him as wearily as if for "Good morning," he had said, "I'm sick of life." Only into his bow to Daisy did he manage to convey a semblance of animation; only as the glances of the two for a moment met, did there sparkle in his lack-lustre eye something approaching to the fire of youth.

For a Wastdale farmhouse both the breakfast-parlour and its occupants wore a strange air of refinement. Low-ceiled. dark, and quaintly-furnished as was the former, it had yet as cheerful a look as ever old-world room was known to brighten into. A vase of primroses stood on the table amidst the breakfast equipage; and the morning sunlight, as it entered at the opened window, lingered for an instant to set off to the best advantage their paly gold; and then found for itself a brighter occupation in sparkling among the shining wealth of Daisy's hair. Dressed with a taste too dainty to permit of the eye receiving from her costume any more defined impression than a vaguely-pleasant one of grace and lightness, Daisy herself, in her seat beside old Anthony, looked as a veritable wildflower might have done when nestling in the crevice of a rock. A weatherbeaten, rugged patriarch was the grandfather; but stately of bearing, and though homely of face and dress, showing in look and manner something of the massive dignity of the oldfashioned English gentleman.

His speech, too, when, after some minutes of silent attention to plate and coffee-cup, he began to talk, smacked but little of the dalesman. "Ho! ho!" he broke out, laughing across the table at Ralston, and speaking with a certain quaint-mannered and cynical bluntness, "and so my Lord Nimrod has tired, has he, even of the company of the bears? We thought such society would have kept him for more than a couple of years out West—didn't we, Daisy?"

"I'm glad he's back, though," said Daisy, looking down, and trifling with her coffeecup. "I never took up a newspaper but I expected to read in it that some of the horrid animals had eaten him."

"Eat George Ralston!—Bruin's not a cannibal, my little lass—at least, not that I've ever heard of him. It would be a bear of a very depraved taste that ate Lord George."

"Orson, Viscount Bruin," said Dallas, languidly. "Sounds natural, and sweetly appropriate, doesn't it, Miss Clifford? Orson's the name that Darwin would have had Lord Ralston christened by, if he had stood his godfather."

"He couldn't," Daisy said indignantly. "There's nothing in the least way bearish about Lord Ralston."

"Oh yes, Miss Daisy, but there is, though," put in the man whom she defended. "If I hadn't Darwin for a godfather, I had a regular Bruin of a tutor—the gruffest old Orson of a fellow that ever took holy orders and growled out a sermon."

"I hear you, George—I hear you, sir!—Ah! my lad," said old Anthony, shaking his fist at him, "if you knew how much I regret that by sparing the rod when you and I were both younger, I should have spoiled the child so thoroughly."

"Would thrashing me have mended matters, sir?" said Ralston, as he passed his cup to Daisy to be filled. "You used to declare, I remember, that, with all my laziness, there was something in me; and that any hard knocks I might get in passing through life would bring it out. I don't believe, for my own part, that the hardest whippings Dame Fortune could administer would make me either a hero or a saint."

"But they might improve you into something of a man. Lad, lad, the way in which you young truants shirk life's lessons is irritating to an old schoolmaster like me. When I see Dallas there, idling away day after day in his lazy fashion; and you, George, dividing a vagabond existence between the New World and the Old, I can't help petitioning Providence that it may play the part of a pedagogue, and flog you both into a better way of living."

Old Anthony stopping for breath, and Lord Ralston only laughing and saying nothing, the young baronet took it upon himself to respond.

"The days are gone by, sir, when schoolmasters used to flog," he remarked, with ever so little of a sneer. "You must have got a long way behind the age in this Wastdale hermitage of yours, not to know that our tutors nowadays have only moral tortures at their disposal, and work upon our feelings, and not our hides."

The old clergyman eyed him grimly. "If I'm behind the age, it's some consolation to me that I can boast myself to be ahead of its products, at least," he answered, scowling at him. "Here are two of them before me—George Ralston and yourself— Ralston, whose highest aim in life seems to be to play the part of Cain among his brother bears; and you who, at twenty-two, are crying out 'Vanitas vanitatum!' I've had half a century of work, and "-rising from the table, and looking round him with a flashing glance—" whether in mind or limb I'm still the stoutest of the three. There's not a boy of you I know of, unless it's my grandson there—don't blush or look sheepish, Jim; you've but a thick head and soft heart, lad, though you be thewed like a son of Anak—that comes near in strength of body to the men of sixty years ago; and as for strength of mind-" He broke

off, chuckling cynically. "Give me another cup of coffee, Daisy," he called out, sitting down again. "These boys will be taking fright at me, if I go on like this. I forgot for the moment that the pulpit and I parted company some twelve years back."

"Do you ever preach, sir, when you climb of a May morning up the Pillar?"

"No, Sir Thomas; but I pray. With the blue heaven above me, and the mountain for an altar, and the sun shining down on me, from where its Maker's hand has placed it, I can pray as a man never prays when he's shut between four walls. This is the twenty-seventh of April; and yonder stands the Pillar—I hope that the fourth morning from this will see me on it."

"At your age, sir, don't you think it's a mistake to climb such a rock as the Pillar?"

Lord Balston asked.

Old Anthony looked up, scowling. "Why, George?" he demanded.

"Because you are almost certain to break your neck if you persist in risking it."

"If I persist!" He seemed for the

moment on the point of answering with some heat; but then his frown cleared off, and he laughed heartily. "Don't you think, my lord," he said, in a sarcastic tone, "that you should give up copying Nimrod? Won't you, in the end, be clawed or gobbled up, if you go on shooting bears?"

"I'll give up bear-shooting, if you'll give up the Pillar."

"Fairly caught," said Dallas, laughing.

Young Clifford set his cup down on the table, and looked across it at his relative. "Will you, grandfather?" he asked. "For Daisy's sake, and mine, and Harry's."

"For Daisy's sake!—If my little lassie wanted me to give up going on the mountains, she would say so, which, as yet, she never has. As for Harry and yourself, you are two great silly simpletons. If I'm soon to die—and my span of life is so long now that I can hardly look for it to be stretched out much farther—better to give up my spirit to my Maker on the hillside than in a bed. To be killed on the Pillar

would be the very death I'd choose for myself."

"Oh, grandfather!" said Daisy, shuddering.

The old man turned to her, and stroked her cheek. "My silly, timid little lass," he said, looking down on her with rugged fondness; "it's not the death we may die that's terrible, it's the fearing it.—No, my lord, I'll make no promise. Better take from me the air I breathe than the liberty of going upon the mountains. I've lived in sight of them, man and boy, preached among them, laboured among them, crossed them by night and by day, loved them as no man bred in a city can ever love. If I'm to die on a mountain at last, it will be the right end to such a life."

"Not when it cuts it short," said Ralston. "I don't ask you to come down altogether from the hill-tops; but only to give up climbing such a mountain as the Pillar.'

"George, I can't. You might as well have asked the man who had one little ewe lamb, that was unto him as a daughter, to

part with it, and buy another, as me to give up the Pillar. If there were any part upon it where a grave could be dug, I'd like to be buried there. Your lordship, I suppose, would prefer a family vault?"

"Can't say that I would, though," said Ralston. "The ocean—the deep Pacific or Atlantic—would be the sort of burying-place I'd choose for myself. What a splendid cemetery it is; and what splendid fellows some were that lie in it. By Jove! when my yacht has been lying inside the coral harbour of some Pacific lagoon, I've thought the beat of the breakers at night upon the reef outside as fine a dirge as Nelson or any other of our English seakings, could wish to have chanted over him."

Dallas stared at the speaker with the air of one who had lighted on sentiment where he least expected it. "Why, Ralston," he said at last, "you're talking nothing but blank verse this morning. When Tennyson goes over to the majority, we shall have you a candidate for the laureateship."

Lord Ralston took no notice of the speech. "Speaking of famous admirals," he said, "I've always wondered that when life and such men were parting company, they could have wished to be buried anywhere but at sea. If I had been Nelson, St. Paul's or Westminster Abbey would have been the last burying-place I'd have cared for. To have been laid like some old Viking in a French liner taken at Trafalgar; and then to have drifted out to sea, the magazine crammed with powder, and fire set to the ship in twenty places. By G—, that would have been a grave!"

He had spoken the last words rather animatedly; and now he glanced at Dallas as if to see to what extent the sentiment was approved of by him. The blank wonder apparent in the other's face made my lord laugh heartily.

"What, Tom," he said, "do you think you have a Tom o' Bedlam at your elbow?"

"He doesn't know what a Tom o' Bedlam is," said Daisy wickedly. "My brother, Harry, who has half Shakespeare by heart, ought to be here to tell him."

"Ah! by the way, is Harry still in London?" Lord Ralston asked.

The question, simple as it was, and put in the most careless tone imaginable, seemed to cast a shadow upon the party. Outside. the birds were singing merrily, and on grass and crag there fell a wonderful warmth of sunlight: but though sunbeam after sunbeam came through the open window, and sported, Ariel-like, in dusky corners, or kissed the brightness of Daisy's hair, no answering sunshine sparkled in her look, or softened the harshness and gloom of old Anthony's features. Ralston, although he did not repeat the inquiry that had changed Daisy's April face from smiles to a threat of tears, looked at her with a surprise that of itself was a question.

"Poor Harry! Yes, Lord Ralston, my brother is still in London," the girl said at last, and with a sigh.

## CHAPTER IV.

## HYDE PARK.

One of the brightest and earliest days of the May of 1870 was drawing to its noon, when a young man of six and twenty stopped before the private entrance of a dingy house in Bayswater, the ground-floor of which was occupied as a shop. "Mr. Clifford?" he said to the little maidservant who appeared, when he had three times rung the bell.

"The room at the top of the house, sir."

Halting at the head of four or five flights of stairs that he had sprung up lightly, to take breath, the visitor saw, through a half-open door, a young fellow, a few years his junior, sitting at a table, and quite absorbed

in reading. From the look of the volume, he fancied it to be a Shakespeare.

"What, Harry," he said, pushing back the door and showing himself, "are you perfecting yourself in the part of Hamlet?"

At the sound of his voice the other sprang up with a great start; and recognizing the intruder, held out both his hands. "My dear, dearest old Louis!" he cried out, while a look of affectionate welcome came like sunshine into his face, and gave a very pleasant expression to features naturally somewhat melancholy and haughty, "you can't think how glad I am to see you. When did you come over?"

- "Last night," said Louis, shaking hands.
  "My mother is with me, and we are staying with some friends of hers at Highgate."
  - "And my aunt, how is she?"
- "As delighted to see London again, as if, instead of mud, the streets grew heather; and for cockney English the natives talked broad Scotch. 'Ma chère petite maman,'

I couldn't help saying to her this morning, 'one would think, to look at you, that, instead of London fog, the view from the window there was Highland mist.'"

"Fog!" cried his friend, "why, we have had none for a month. It's the sort of bright spring weather, this, that there must have been six thousand years ago in the Garden of Eden, when Adam was courting Eve. Look at that blue patch up there; one scarcely ever sees such sky in London. I was wishing half an hour ago that I were Shelley's skylark and could spring up into it, and sing."

"A blue sky do you call it, Harry?" said the other. "Ah! my lad, if you could see the flag that for nine months in the year Heaven hangs out over the south of France. When I was an *elève* of the Polytechnique, and spending my holidays at Nîmes, I used to watch of a night the ensign I'm talking of, and be reminded by the points of light that twinkled in it of another star-spangled banner—that of the great republic of the West."

- "And when will there be a great republic of the East?" said Clifford. "When will France get rid of the Empire?"
- "When the Emperor forgets Solomon's warning that, 'To everything there is a season;' and makes war at an unlucky time. I wish, by the way, that some one I know of had a better memory for that warning. 'To be, or not to be,' may be very seasonable reading in an English November; but a May afternoon like this, when even London sees a little of the sun, is scarcely the time for getting melancholy with Hamlet over Yorick's skull.'
- "Not guilty," cried his cousin; "I was listening to what he has to say to Rosen-crantz and Guildenstern."
- "Why, that's a more morbid business than even the churchyard scene. 'Man delights me not, nor woman neither.' My poor poet, have you got to such a hypochondriacal pass at two-and-twenty? We shall have you in Westminster Abbey soon, imagining that you are holding what is left of Dan Chaucer's headpiece in your hand,

and telling yourself, 'This skull had a tongue in it; and could sing once.' I think, Harry, I shall discard the name your god-fathers and godmothers gave you; and rechristen you by that of Hamlet. It's true you don't resemble the Prince of Denmark much in person."

"Not resemble him! Why, you un-Shaksperian Philistine, do you imagine he was dark and tall and thin? You remember what the Queen says in the fencing-scene: 'He's fat, and scant of breath.' In Shakespeare's eyes, the Hamlet she spoke of was as true a Northman in person as by birth. His very anger has a light-haired look about it."

Roland shrugged his shoulders. "Have I crossed the Channel," he said, "to trouble myself about the colour of Hamlet's hair! The trees in Kensington Gardens would be a better subject to discuss. Get your hat on, my dear fellow, and we'll go and take a look at them."

In another quarter of an hour, the two friends were crossing from the Round

Pond towards the Serpentine; deep-blue sky above them, seen in brilliant patches through overarching trees; the sun shining on the shining green; all Nature as youthful and smiling as on the day when God looked on the world which He had made, and beheld that it was good.

- "How my grandfather would enjoy risking his life upon the Pillar on a day like this," Clifford said, looking about him.
- "He risks it regularly once a year still, I suppose?"
- "Regularly every First of May. This year he came back with a sprained wrist; and my brother remonstrated so energetically—and I'm afraid so violently—that they have quarrelled, and James talks of going to New Zealand."
- "To New Zealand! What will he take to there?"
- "To sheep-farming, I suppose. He has practical knowledge enough of the subject; and then he has got hold of some theory that is to make his flocks thrive like Jacob's, he believes. So that, by next First

of May, one of my poor little Daisy's two brothers will probably be as far away from her as the Antipodes.

"And her other brother—her favourite—where will he be, Harry?"

"Drudging in a school, I suppose," said Clifford bitterly; "hating his work, and crying out, with the Psalmist, 'Et projecisti me in profundum in corde maris, et flumen circumdedit me.' I'd give, with pleasure, half of whatever years are left to me to have for the other half the clearness of mind and vigour of brain that I had two years ago."

Roland was about to answer, when he caught sight of a large and fairly-noisy crowd, gathered at no great distance on the grass. The two young men had by this time quitted the gardens; and were crossing Hyde Park towards the Marble Arch.

- "Who are those fellows, Harry?" he said, pointing to them.
- "Who?—oh, Odger and Bradlaugh's ragged regiments of patriots, I suppose.

They were to have a field-day here this afternoon, I know."

- "A field-day! What do they meet about?"
- "Oh, to discuss the establishment of what they understand by the word Republic—an Ishmaelitish sort of commonwealth, where every man's hand would be lifted up against his neighbour's pocket."
- "Are they ever likely to give any trouble to the Government?"
- "Trouble!" said the other, laughing. "A policeman on foot would be a Saul to the poor devils, and scatter a thousand of them;—a mounted policeman would be a very David, and set ten thousand scampering."
- "Who is that speaking to them?" asked Roland.
- "A little lawyer's clerk turned democrat," said Clifford, after staring for a few seconds at the orator. "It's Citizen Charles Bradlaugh; at present of Hyde Park; but who hopes one day to be of the House of Commons."

"Of the House of Commons?"

"Yes; as member for Northampton. At the last general election he invited the electors of that borough to choose Bradlaugh, the friend of liberty, for their representative; and they replied, like the patriotic individual in Canning's 'Knifegrinder,' that they'd see him d—d first. So, until a dissolution of Parliament gives him an opportunity of imploring them to re-consider their determination, he employs himself in manufacturing an army of Friends of Liberty out of the raw material of Whitechapel and St. Giles; and in occasionally reviewing the blackguards in the park here.

"Does he expect them ever to translate into English, 'Sois mon frère, ou je te tue?"

"He!" said Clifford, shrugging his shoulders. "If he did, they'd render it, 'Be my brother, or I'll pick your pocket.' We'll be in the thick of the throng directly," he continued. "Keep a sharp look-out, remember, on your watch and pockets."

"Ah! we breed another type of democrat in France," was Roland's comment on the caution. "What a noise those fellows on the other side of the crowd are making!" he said, a moment later. "Is it Citizen Bradlaugh's eloquence that excites them so?"

"It's a row," said Clifford, pushing forward. "There are generally rows at meetings in Hyde Park."

He had made but a few steps further when a woman, who was pushing her way wildly through the crowd, caught sight of his face, and made towards him.

- "Stop!" she panted, catching at his sleeve. "Save my husband, Mr. Clifford! These dreadful Radicals are murdering him."
- "Can this be Mrs. Sprott?" the young man said dubiously. "What can possibly have——?"
- "My husband, my husband!" she iterated, interrupting him. "See!" pointing to a hatless figure that was struggling among twenty roughs, "he'll be robbed and murdered. Oh, Mr. Clifford, help him!"

Clifford pushed quickly forward, and Roland followed him. In a minute or two they were returning, a little the worse in dress and person for their efforts in the interval, and half-dragging, half-carrying between them a breathless, gesticulating little individual, with one coat-tail, and a damaged shirt-front.

"Your watch is gone," said Clifford, looking at him.

The gentleman he addressed made a desperate dash at one of his remaining pockets. "By Jove!" he said, "and so's my pocket-book."

- "Have you lost much?" asked his rescuer.
- "A cheque—it's crossed though, luckily—and a lot of notes. Not B. of E., you understand, but notes for Munden," the little man continued humorously. "The deuce take Archer for commissioning me to attend at an affair like this!"
- "You still write for 'Men and Women,' then?"
  - "You haven't seen the publication men-

tioned as defunct? The grave of bankruptcy would close upon it in six weeks, if its columns and my pen were parted."

"Your dagger, don't you mean?" Clifford's tone, like his manner, was barely civil. "When a stab had to be dealt at anybody or anything, it was generally in my time done by Mr. Hodgson Sprott."

Whatever might be Mr. Sprott's failings, he had the virtue of being "slow to anger,"—slow, at least, to venture upon any open expression of that passion. "What made you give up writing for us, Clifford?" he inquired, willing, perhaps, to turn the conversation. "We miss our musical critic, I can tell you."

- "Did Munden never tell you why I gave up writing?"
- "Never said a word to me upon the subject."
- "What, not to his right-hand man? Look here, Sprott, I'm well aware that when you sold yourself to the journal that still owns you, the editor bargained with you that you should lay your conscience up

in lavender, and only bring with you a very moderate stock of the inconvenient virtue called candour. Do you mean to say that Munden never told you he and I had had a difference, and that it was caused by what he called my milk-and-water scruples?"

How the person interrogated would have replied is uncertain; for at that moment Mrs. Sprott, who had been waiting, panting, at a few yards' distance, found breath enough for speech, and swept majestically up to the three men, a vision of flame-coloured trimmings, and silks of the hottest possible hues.

- "The horrid villains!—the nasty, thieving, murdering, vulgar wretches!" the lady panted, shaking a parasol wrathfully at the mob. "Robbing a gentleman of his watch and pocket-book! My dear, we're in a state of revolution. You'll say so in your article next week, remember."
- "But, Angie," her spouse objected, "I've lost my notes."
- "Go at once, my dear, then, and take some more. Mr. Clifford and this other

gentleman will protect you, I'm sure, while you are in the crowd."

"Two men protect me from ten thousand! I think, my love, I'll trust to memory."

"Mr. Sprott, I won't allow it," said the lady. "Your wife, as dear Lord Nelson said at Trafalgar—though, of course, he said it of his country, and not of Lady Nelson—expects that you will do your duty. There's that dreadful creature of a Bradlaugh talking still. For anything you can tell at this distance, he may be egging on those other wretches to blow up the House of Lords with gunpowder. Go at once, my dear, and listen to him."

Sprott turned reluctantly to obey.

"You wouldn't think," whispered Clifford in an aside to Roland, "that this henpecked little Benedict is a terrible hitter with his Pen.—Oh, certainly, Sprott, we'll chaperon you," he said aloud, in answer to a whisper from the journalist.

The notes being taken, and the meeting about to disperse, Mrs. Sprott bethought herself of giving information of the robbery

at Vine Street; and entreated the further protection of the two young men for her husband and herself to the gates of the park. As they walked on across the grass in the direction of Apsley House, Clifford presently called to mind the question he had left half uttered.

"Business or pleasure, Mrs. Sprott," he said, "which was it that brought you to Hyde Park on a day like this?"

"You can't think, surely, Mr. Clifford, that a lady would ever go for pleasure in among a nasty, dirty mob. It was to study the horrid creatures that I ventured here with Hodgson."

"Mrs. Sprott thinks of making the English lower classes the subject of a novel," her husband said in explanation. "She wishes to paint them—not couleur de rose, in Dickens's fashion—but——"

"I think, my dear, I am very well able to say myself what it is I wish.—Yes, Mr. Clifford, I intend to describe these dreadful creatures in a novel. Dickens has flattered them so outrageously in his works, and has put such shocking revolutionary ideas into their heads, that it's quite time some one should, in the words of Burns—a low fellow, though, that Burns—'show them as their betters see them.' I don't pretend that I have the genius of Charles Dickens; but at least, thank Heaven! I have candour and refinement; and I shall labour to paint our lower classes as they really are, and not as Mr. Dickens shows them."

Clifford turned his face aside to hide a smile. "I suppose, Mrs. Sprott," he said, "you look on Charles Dickens as a traitor to the British Constitution?"

"Oh, he is, Mr. Clifford, I assure you! When I was at Geneva, and they showed me the statue of Robinson Crusoe—not the Crusoe who was cast on a desert island, but that dreadful atheistical creature whose novels brought about the French Revolution—I said to myself, 'Yes; and we have a novelist who'd bring about a revolution if he dared.' When you are as familiar as myself with French history and literature,

Mr. Clifford, you'll agree with me that Robinson Crusoe and Charles Dickens are very much alike. Oh, Dickens would be delighted to be at the head of a revolution! He'll never have a chance to attempt one, though—our soldiers and police are too much in his way."

- "And who may Robinson Crusoe be?" Roland asked of his cousin, as they walked away.
- "She said his statue was at Geneva," Clifford answered, laughing. "Jean Jacques Rousseau, I should imagine."
- "Rousseau! Is this woman a fair specimen of your English lady novelist?"
- "Not a fair one, certainly. She has publishers, though, and readers therefore, I imagine," said the other carelessly. "And now, Louis, tell me what you are come to London to do. I have been doing nothing since I saw you, but tell you about myself."
- "Why, my Scotch grandfather is dead, and he has left my mother a tolerably large share of what little he had to leave—one

good proof that she was his favourite daughter. We are come to London to receive the legacy."

"Is Miss Cameron with you?"

"She perversely insisted on staying at Château Roland. *Maman* was quite angry about it—if anything so mild as her emotions could be described as anger. She's certainly the sweetest-tempered, as well as the dearest woman in the world."

"And so Miss Cameron is left behind."

"She left herself behind, I tell you. I'd have had her come with pleasure, and my mother would have been delighted. But the girl was in one of her perverse tempers, and pleaded that to go to London would only make her miserable. So there she stays, mistress of all she beholds; that is to say, of a certain lonely château, perched on the top of a hill among the vines, and two old servants."

"Has she perverse tempers then?"

"Has she! I pity the man who gets her for a wife, when she sets up her will in opposition to his. She has the quietest, and yet the most irritating way in the world, of showing you that you may break her, if you please, but that she'll never bend."

"It's evident that you have not lost your heart to her," said Clifford, laughing, "or you would never criticise her as you do. Is she beautiful?"

"I can't tell you. Once, when I was quarrelling with her, and she had got thoroughly angered and excited, I thought that I had never seen anything so beautiful in my life. But generally her look is too severe and cold for beauty."

"I understand—a sort of cross between the Amazon and the nun. Is that it, Louis?"

"No, she has nothing of the nun about her. Something of Charlotte Corday she has, dreaming in the stillness of her father's house at Caen of a great deed that was to deliver France; or of Joan of Arc, before she had put on armour and girded a sword to her side, and while as yet she was only planning her holy war against the English. On my word, I believe she has something in her of the Charlotte and the Joan; and that, if it ever came to the pass of striking like the first, she would do so as strongly. She would make a capital wife for you, Harry."

- "Me!—for me!"
- "Yes, for you. You are the very type of fellow that she would be likely to select for her hero—manly enough in your way, and yet with something of the dreamer and the poet about you. Is your heart engaged?"
  - "Yes," said Clifford, briefly.
- "Ah!" said Roland, his eyes sparkling. "And by whom?"
- "By a certain nymph who has jilted me; and yet whom I can't persuade myself to forsake in return. She was born on Parnassus some thousands of years ago, one of a family of nine, and I am, as I shall always be, her very devoted slave and lover."
- "And this unsubstantial divinity is really, you mean to tell me, your only flame?"
- "At present, yes. What the future may bring forth, I leave to the future to show."

- "It may bring you and Isabel Cameron together."
- "If it does, I'm not at all likely to fall in love with her. She's a type of girl, so far as I can make out from your description of her, whom I might admire, but whom I should certainly never love."
  - " No?"
- "No. My ideal divinity is of a fairer and softer cast."
- "Like mine," said Roland, thoughtfully. "But then, what man ever does meet with his ideal in this topsy-turvy world of ours. I perfectly well remember that at your age I had a vague vision of some blue-eyed, golden-haired nymph, mignonne of face and figure, who was to be alternately my tease and my comforter, and as 'uncertain, coy, and hard to please'—I hope I'm not misquoting Scott—when all went well with me, as she was to minister like an angel to me when fortune and I had fallen out. But no such fair one ever fell in my way."
- "Ah! you and my sister should have met," said Clifford, laughingly. "She

would have teased you to your heart's content, and the more mercilessly the more she cared for you. Go north, Louis, and take Wastdale in your way. I'm certain my grandfather would be delighted to make you welcome for a week, and during that time you could try if it were possible for you to fall in love with your other cousin, my sister Daisy. You'll find her blue-eyed and golden-haired, and in all respects the Egeria of your dreams."

"I might be tempted to take you at your word, if I had time for the visit, Harry. Unfortunately, I'm only in London for three days, and in a week from to-day my leave expires. When do you go back to this drudgery of yours?"

"On Monday."

"And this is Saturday. Well, we'll make the best of the interval at least. So come now, and let me show you to your aunt. I've a little pet project that has been hatching itself in my brain as I crossed the Channel, and I want her help in coaxing you to agree to it."

## CHAPTER V.

## EXTRACTS FROM A JOURNAL—(I.) "DE PROFUNDIS."

"I FEEL minded to cry out with Milton, 'O dark, dark—irrecoverably dark!' Something in me seems to have snapt, some harp-string of the brain from which invisible fingers were wont, long ago, to draw subtle music. I say long ago because, although but a year has passed since I left Wastdale for London, that year has been sufficient to make me very old in hope and heart.

"How brightly the old scenes and faces shine in upon me as I sit this May evening in my darkening garret. As if memory, the kindly phantom, were seeking to cast a light as of moonbeams on a life which the sun of inspiration no longer brightens, the past has never seemed more real to me than since the future grew beclouded. am housed within hearing of the Westminster clock, and the moon that just now sheets my bed with silver and fills with her cold, pure beams the room in which I write, rose, not twenty minutes since, over the black roofs opposite; but for the moment I see her shining, not on roof and roadway, but on lake and rock, and the sound that reaches me is not the dull monotone of the 'memory's monitor' at Westminster, but the more musical voice of the wind calling from the hills that neighbour Wastdale. How often that trumpet-tongue stirred in me as a boy vague rejoicings and uncertain longings! how glorious shone on me the face of the seraph, Genius, as I knelt, her boy-worshipper, at the altar of the hills!

"It has always seemed to me one of the mysteries of poetry that a man so great as Dante, crowned with the triple diadem of Poet, prophet, and patriot, should have looked so coldly on the loveliness of nature. He who all his life watched the face of

Beatrice shining down upon him like a star, who listened to the songs of paradise, and gazed in the spirit upon undying and unimaginable glories, was not as is the fool who. living with God's fair world about him, has eyes only for the devil's filth and dross. Yet Dante, to whom had been given a soul mighty enough to look upon that world where the blaze of a thousand suns would be as darkness, because 'the glory of God doth lighten it,' was as one blind when looking on the face of earth. He who so often must have seen morning shine out upon the sleeping Adriatic, or burn in trembling crimson among the snowfields of the Alps, could feel no love for sea and mountain. What a contrast is the Tuscan to my master, Shelley! To the marvellous Florentine there came at times a shining as of the blinding light of Heaven; or a blackening horror falling upon his spirit like darkness from the nether pit; and he sang of Beatrice walking in the noon of paradise, or of the sad face of Francesca fading away into the night of hell, or of Ugolino sitting

in the Tower of Famine, and looking quietly down upon the face of his dead son. Upon Shelley's soul there burned no vision either of Christ's face and the love that shines in light about it, or of the hate and pain that wrap as if with thunder-clouds the faded beauty of Satan; but he looked into nature's eyes and grew enamoured of her, and was accepted of her as of a bride. And if, like a morning overcast when the sun is still but newly risen, he passed away in early manhood, and left the sweetest notes of his song unuttered; and if, few as were his days, they brought him very much of pain, I would still choose that my life should be as the life of Shelley and not as the life of Dante; and account it the happier part to Pour forth divinest cadences to wind and bird and plant, than to look as high as the heavens where God reigns veiled in excess of brightness, and as low as the hell where Satan sits throned on darkness, and be blind the while to the beauty of the daisy at my feet.

<sup>&</sup>quot;Why is it that of the two meanings

attaching to the sweet name, Margaret, we have never called my sister but by the prettier and the homelier word? Will her lover, if the future some day send her one, bethink himself of the other meaning of Margaret; and while those who saw her blossom into her flower-like girlhood know her still as Daisy, insist that for him, at least, she shall be Pearl? Her lover am I dreaming of? When and where, I wonder, will the future find her one? There is not, that I know of, a man worthy of her within twenty miles of Wastdale.

"I wish with all my heart that Lord Ralston and his friend were gone from Wastdale. My grandfather took a strange liking to Dallas when Ralston brought him first among us three years ago, but I——And Ralston himself—they say of his lord-ship, I know, that he has ruined not a few victims in his time. I doubt it; I doubt that his is a nature to deliberately play the villain. 'They say' is commonly more than half a liar. And Daisy—my sister, I know, coquettish as she is, or would have been

had she been bred up anywhere but in such a convent-like place as Wastdale—Daisy is wholly innocent and pure.

"I sat down, I think, to put on record the visions that the moon had brought to me of mere and rock; and behold! my fancy has wandered from Scawfell to the Alps, and from Wastwater to the Adrian Sea: and for the keen face of my grandfather I have looked upon the haggard one of Dante. At least, my wanderings are of little conse-If in days when hope was still high and my brain clear, I could grapple with my visions as Jacob grappled with the angel, and exult to find myself their master. it is much to me now that my dulled mind and overworn intellect should yield me even such disconnected fragments of thought as I am passing an hour in noting down. follow where once I led. What I write is no longer for the eyes of others; this journal is kept wholly for my own. How will it read to me in ten years from now, I wonder, if it and I should be spared as long?

"I ask myself how the moon yonder, that

seems to look down at me so wearily, is shining to-night over Wastdale. My grandfather, perhaps, may at this moment be smoking a post-cœnal pipe in her company, and looking up the valley at that Pillar upon which he yearly risks his life. Shall I, too, live to be white-haired and to possess in my extreme old age a hermitage among the mountains?

"Give me what age might, it could not, though it brought me the 'honour, love, obedience, troops of friends,' that Macbeth sighed to think were as far removed from him as was Paradise—nay, if it bestowed on me in an honourable manner the kinghood for which he sold his soul—it could not, I say, equal with all these realities the delight of the visions of my boyhood. 'Thy light alone,' says Shelley, in hymning the praises of Intellectual Beauty:—

<sup>&</sup>quot;'Thy light alone, like mist o'er mountains driven, Or music by the night-wind sent
Through strings of some still instrument,
Or moonlight on a midnight stream,
Gives grace and truth to life's unquiet dream.'

<sup>&</sup>quot;The heavenly light of which my master

speaks has now for near half a year been absent from me; but though I feel at times as if a cord in my brain had snapt, my heart-strings still hold firm, and vibrate tonight as if airs from some spiritual Araby the Blest were waking them to sweet, low As the Ranz des Vaches calls back music. to the wandering Swiss the memory of lonely Alpine valleys, where on summer mornings no sound breaks the stillness but the musical tinkle of bells that hang from the necks of feeding cattle, so this strange music of the heart calls up before me Scawfell, and the Burnmoor heather, and the great sweep of grassy upland that curls like a breaking wave right up to the foot of the How often, as a boy, have I grev Pillar. lain among that grass, and dreamed, boylike, of the laurels that my manhood was to gather; how often, when the last ray of the sunset was fading from Scawfell, has the mountain become to me Parnassus, and with half-shut eyes I have espied forms as of the Muses walking there. In those days life was strangely lovely to me; when I read Ecclesiastes, the Preacher's cry of 'Vanitas vanitatum!' seemed to me no wisdom but a foolishness. In these——

"And vet—and vet Solomon, after all, was Though Genius has hid her face from me, and my life's summer is so early overcast, neither drudgery, nor disappointed ambition, nor the suddenness with which that fickle nymph, Hope, has jilted me, can make it altogether vain for me that I have lived. Let the doors of both Fame and Fortune remain for ever shut on me; that of Memory is still an open one, and through it there shines upon me something of the sunlight of the past. I see Wastdale; and the dear old farmhouse; and the honest faces of the mountains; and the dark, still waters of the mere; and sunset burning on the red line of the Screes—such sunsets as a twelvemonth back I have watched setting heaven and earth aflame as if with a torch kindled for the nuptials of some god. Wisest surely of all the children born to Adam was he that prayed, 'Lord, keep my memory green!' While remembrance remains un-

withered, I can rejoice in the thought that I have laid up for myself treasure in my vouth—the treasure of lessons learned in the lap of my mother, Nature; and so may turn at will from the countenance of the ill-omened Present, and refresh myself by looking into the kind eyes of the Long Ago. As fervently as Schiller can I cry, 'Ich habe gelebt und geliebet! '-lived in Dreamland, among visions of the imperial face of Shakespeare, shining forth as from beneath a diadem of stars; and the haggard majesty of Dante; and the serenity of Milton; and Shelley's spirit-smile and radiant eyes, beautiful with a beauty not of clay, and watching, now Prometheus hanging bleeding upon Caucasus, and now the skylark singing in the heavens—loved the mountains in sun and shadow; and the unfathomable blue of summer noon; and the crimson lights of dawn and sunset; and the moon, rising white above some shadowy crag, and shining softly upon dale and mere. Let me not awake; let me never say, 'It is a dream.'"

## CHAPTER VI.

#### BUSBY TICKELL.

It would seem that Clifford refused the proposal of his cousin, whatever it might be; for walking with him in the early morning of the following Monday towards Kensington, Roland bent all his efforts to bringing him to reconsider his determination.

- "You pain both my mother and myself by your absurd refusal," he urged. "Come with me to France."
  - "Why should I go to France?"
- "For one thing, because it will give sincere pleasure to two very sincere friends of yours. For another, because your brain wants rest. Come and bury yourself alive for six months in Château Roland. You shall have the room that was mine as a boy—the very one from which Laporte

Roland sprang out, sword in hand, to his death, when his dog of a lieutenant betrayed him to the troops of Villars. So come and keep my mother company in the old house."

Clifford shook his head. "You know, Louis," he said, "that there is no room on earth I would like better to lodge in, nor a man whose guest I had rather be than yours. But I can't go to France just now; London is the only place where I can earn my bread."

"Your bread! What has getting your bread to do with your becoming our guest for a month or two? I tell you, I want you to keep your aunt company in that lonely old château, and to be a son to her—she almost looks on you as one—while her own son is with the army. Your brain needs rest, you say; and what rest could be more perfect than in Château Roland? Why, the old building is simply buried in vines and trees; and lies like an island in a sea of mountains, with not another habitation in sight. Go, and stay there through the summer."

- "And be a burden on my aunt's small income. If she had pounds sterling where she has francs, I would like nothing better than to spend two or three months in Château Roland. As it is——"
  - "You persist in saying 'No' to me?"
- "I don't see that it is possible for me to say 'Yes.' My dear fellow, I can't accept your kindness; but, believe me, I feel it just as much as if I were to become your guest for six months, and eat you out of house and home."
- "Kindness!—Bah!" Roland stopped, and took his companion by the arm. "And what if I were to ask you to quarter yourself in France for life?" he said.

Clifford looked at him in some surprise. "Why, I should stare at you pretty much as I am doing now," he said; "and ask you what in the world you meant."

- "Listen, then; and remember that what I tell you is in confidence. This is May; before the summer is over France will be at war with Germany."
  - "France and Germany at war! Why,

what quarrel is there between them? Which country would take the initiative in setting perhaps the whole of the Continent in a blaze?"

Roland laughed sardonically. "Which court, don't you mean?" he said. "Why, in the present instance, that of the Tuileries. Moltke would like well enough to be at us, no doubt; and so, perhaps, would Bismarck; but I fancy the King, their master, hardly relishes such a devil's game as Nap will invite him to take part in, and has no particular wish to see our armies and his own at death-grips. No, our own Emperor will make the war, and fulfil, in losing it, the warning of Scripture, 'He that takes the sword shall perish by the sword."

"But his excuse, Louis? What excuse has he for an attack upon Germany?"

"Oh, Nap is seldom wanting in pretences. When he seeks, it would be strange if his guardian genius—whom I take to be the Devil—fails to suggest him one. If he spoke the truth, indeed, he would admit that he thinks victory abroad will put an

end to discontents at home, and hopes to secure by means of a bloody and causeless war, a throne that was set up in the blood of the *coup d'état*. You don't ask me how I come to be so well-informed as to the Emperor's policy, Harry?":

- "I thought it was merely a guess of yours."
- "Why, partly that; but there's something in it, too, of a secret I have surprised. There may, perhaps, be a dozen men in all France, beyond the very few trusted at the Tuileries, who share it with me—one of them my old comrade of the Ecole Polytechnique, Paul Cavalier."
  - "Is he a creature of the Government?"
- "Who? Cavalier?—A Red of the deepest dye, mixed up with every secret society, including the International. He holds under his thumb another of the chiefs of the societies—a little Judas of an artillery lieutenant whom he had discovered to be a mere spy of the Minister of War, Lebœuf; and he squeezes information out of the poor wretch like water from a sponge."

"But surely no Minister would entrust anything very secret to a tool of that kind."

"Lebœuf is not a War Minister, my dear fellow, but an ass in the place of one. But, whether he trusted this little Judas of a Vautran, or Vautran stole the secret, Cavalier, at any rate, heard enough from the rascal to make him suspect that war was determined upon. My own suspicions and observations—old acquaintance, and our harmony of political sentiments make Paul and myself as open as the day to each other in politics—confirmed the conclusions Cavalier had arrived at. As certainly as you and I stand talking here now, France will declare war before the summer is over."

"And do you expect that before the winter is over the French army will be in Berlin?"

"The French Republican army may enter Berlin,—never the Imperial one."

"Why not? Is the military system of the Empire so rotten?"

"Is it rotten!—I tell you the Prussian war-machine, governed as Moltke will govern it, will shatter our present one as iron shatters rotten wood. We have a superb army by the report of the Minister of War, and a skeleton one in realitygenerals whose uniforms are simple miracles in the way of gold lace, and whose skulls Nature has forgotten to furnish with brains -thieves of commissaries who lie and plunder so remorselessly that, instead of being in a condition to take the field against an army like the Prussian one, we have scarcely war material enough on hand for a couple of corps d'armée. The devil is not omniscient, it seems; these things are secrets from the Emperor."

"And France knows nothing of them either?"

"Ah! when she does," said Roland, "you will see her, and Bismarck will see her, too,—how, when the dead are lying thick about our trampled eagles, she will rise up furious, and shiver the sceptre of this mock Cæsar to fragments. That is the

advent I want you to wait for, Harry, in our château in the Cevennes—the advent of a Republic; and when the glorious day comes," continued the speaker, with increasing animation, "I will use such interest as I may have won to obtain you a commission in her armies. And if I fail, —why, Hoche, remember, began as a private soldier."

"And my grandfather?—and my poor Daisy? What would they think, if they heard that war had broken out; and I away from England?—No, Louis, I'll make a bargain with you. Whenever a French Republic is proclaimed, I'll come to you."

Roland bent his eyes on him searchingly. "Do you make that promise seriously?" he asked.

"On my honour, seriously. It seems no very rash promise to make," said Clifford, smiling, "when one considers how long the Empire has already lasted. But, rash or not, I'll make it."

"And in the meantime you'll give up this drudgery of teaching the young idea how to shoot?—pretty employment for a fellow like you!"

"And be out of any other employment all the summer, perhaps. What ravens, do you think, would feed me? I have not ten pounds in the world."

"No, you have over fifty," said the other coolly.

"I'd be glad to know where they are, then. You don't mean, I suppose, that I should sponge on my grandfather to that extent?"

"I mean that in Paris, three years ago, you and I agreed that we would always have a common purse; and that mine—ours, that is—contains at present over a hundred pounds. Take the half of this sum that belongs to you, and live on it while you look for other employment, if you won't come after my mother and me to the Cevennes."

Clifford grasped the speaker's hand, and wrung it warmly. "Thank you, Louis," he said; "you are always the Roland of old days. But I can't take this money—even from you."

"Borrow it, then," said Roland savagely. "On my word, Harry, the manner in which you treat your friends is enough to make them ask of you, 'Is thy servant a dog that you should do this thing?""

"If I could take alms from any man, Louis, it would be from you."

"Alms! The devil you could! If that's the light in which my proposal presents itself to you, I can only remark that, though there may have been countrymen of my mother's poorer, there never was a Scot, from the time of the Black Douglas to the present day, more ridiculously and fastidiously proud."

"Is it ridiculous to respect oneself?"

"Is it necessary that your self-respect should be so very prickly? Your friends can't rub up against it but they wound themselves."

"I'm sorry if I have wounded you, Louis."

"But you have, I tell you. You can easily put matters right, though—simply by saving up your talk of alms until I offer them to you; and in the meantime accept-

ing what I do offer, and that is only the kindness that one friend may do another."

- "But if the other sees no chance that he will ever be able to repay either the money or the kindness?"
- "Oh, if you are determined to make a debtor and creditor business of it, I can say no more. I don't understand, though, Harry, why you should treat me—first, as if I were Dives casting some crumbs from his table to Lazarus; and now, as if I were a Jew money-lender, wanting to lend money on good security."
- "Well, lend it to me on bad, then; or, rather, on none at all, and I'll accept it. I can't say more, Louis. I would not say as much to any other man living."
  - "Fifty pounds?"
- "No; twenty. Twenty will be enough, with what I have in hand, to carry me on till long after Midsummer; and before then I hope to have found fresh employment, if I leave Kensington."
- "If you leave Kensington! I intend you to tell the old scoundrel you have been

drudging for this very morning that you intend to leave him."

- "Why should it be this morning? Tomorrow will be time enough to tell him, if I decide on going; and honestly, Louis, I think I shall so decide."
- "Decide at once," said Roland, laying his hand on the other's arm, and stopping him. "Frankly, Harry, I can't bear to think of your leading the life you do."
- "Well, I will so decide, then. I'll give him notice to-day; and tell you, when I see you this evening, how he took it. In the meantime, here we are before the den I drudge in."
- "Au revoir," said Roland, offering his hand.
- "Au revoir," answered Clifford, shaking hands and hurrying off. He disappeared through a gate inscribed "Hill House School," and his late companion slowly turned away.

Like Eugene Aram, though he drudged all that day in school, Clifford's "thoughts were otherwhere." He had worn the collar of this dull species of servitude for some four months now, and it had often fretted him, but never more sorely than to-day. Many men are made ushers by circumstances; few by choice; and of all the many who have been forced into their vocation by the spur of poverty, this was one of the most unfit for it. That he did his work was certain; but that he hated it not less true.

Why is it that teaching in an English private school is so contemned and contemptible an avocation? Why should the teacher be even now but a degree better than the drudge he was in the days of Goldsmith, and "Bind yourself rather apprentice for seven years to turn a cutler's wheel," the advice that one might well give to a young man contemplating embracing such a profession—if profession it can be called?

Clifford had asked himself these questions often; and set himself to solve them with the mean figure of the man who was his principal ever full in his mind's eye, and jaundicing his thoughts. "Because," was

his verdict, "we are—or it would seem that we are—unanimously of opinion in England that the first law of education is disorder, and the teacher a nonentity to be formed out of the rubbish of other callings. Our private schools are, in too many instances, social nuisances; our education-market is glutted with ill-paid, incompetent, untrained men. Have we no system? Yes, the system of the mill-horse that travels day by day in an unvarying, beaten round. We travel, like him, in a circle; and our motto, if we had but the honesty to write it up above our school-room doors, would be, 'Plod, plod on.'"

When he had plodded through the hours of morning school on the forenoon that followed his talk with Roland, he was accosted by Mr. Busby Tickell, his employer, a strange little figure in a beard and greasy skull-cap, who irresistibly recalled to his assistant the Fagin of "Oliver Twist," with, "Mr. Clifford, I wish a few minutes' conversation with you in my study."

The young man in some surprise com-

plied, and followed him to the little sanctum so designated.

- "Mr. Clifford," said the other, by way of commencing the interview, "you were this morning at least five minutes late."
  - "I am sorry, sir; but----"
- "You apologize, I presume?" Tickell interrupted. "Yes, sir; but an apology, let me tell you, does not alter facts. Let us look at them for a moment. Fifty boys, Mr. Clifford, are committed to my charge. I am labouring to train them up in habits of punctuality and industry; and on the very first morning of the new term—a critical time, Mr. Clifford, a time when any man who had conscientious notions of his position would as soon—as soon—I was going to say would as soon have picked his employer's pocket of his money as of his time; but perhaps you would object to the illustration?"
  - "I should, indeed," said Clifford.
- "You don't object, though, to illustrating Watts's hymn—the one about the sluggard, I mean—at my expense. Um?" said

Tickell, chuckling grimly, as he helped himself to a pinch of snuff. "But, as I was saying, Mr. Clifford, here is the first day of the term; and here are you, my senior assistant tutor,—late. I don't like such negligence in my assistants. I am an old man—sixty-five years old, next birthday -and for forty of them I have been a schoolmaster. My system reckons punctuality as one of the cardinal virtues of a tutor; and in the forty years of my scholastic life I have never once—never once. sir—departed from that system, or failed in the practice of that virtue; and I can't allow my assistants to be habitually unpunctual."

"I was never late before this morning, Mr. Tickell."

"If you wish to meet with success in life, young man," said Tickell abruptly, "you must alter a number of your present habits. The tone, for instance, in which you have just answered me—it's most unseemly. Let me tell you, I'm not accustomed to hear a person whom I employ

raise his voice in such a manner in speaking to me. I won't allow it; do you hear?"

The other made no answer; but sat looking at his employer very quietly.

Tickell helped himself to a pinch of snuff and proceeded. "Lax principles, Mr. Clifford, loose habits—and I'm afraid that your principles are somewhat lax."

- "Sir!" said Clifford, sharply.
- "You mean, I suppose, on what authority do I make the statement. Um?" said Tickell, questioningly.
- "I should at least be glad to know, sir, on what authority you insult me."
- "Oh, no insult, Mr. Clifford!—no insult, I hope. I merely wish to put a few questions to you, and to give and receive a few explanations."
  - "I am at your service, Mr. Tickell."
- "Well, Mr. Clifford, to begin with, I should be glad to know—and I have a particular reason for putting the question—what degree of credence you attach to the Scriptures?"
  - "I attach such credence to them as the

majority of people do, Mr. Tickell. My grandfather is a clergyman of the Church of England, and I was brought up in her doctrines."

"Um—h'm—a member of the Church of England, are you? I should have thought the company you keep would have made an atheist of you by this time."

"Sir!" said Clifford, more hotly than before.

"You won't deny that Bradlaugh's one? He was not expounding the Thirty-Nine Articles, was he, when you went to hear him in Hyde Park last Saturday? Um?" said Tickell, chuckling, and filling up the momentary pause that followed with a second chuckle and a pinch of snuff.

"You look puzzled, Mr. Clifford," he resumed. "My son, sir, saw you there—my son and another boy who happened to be with him—Arthur Coleman. Curiosity led 'em—as it often leads boys and fools into places where they have no business to be—into Hyde Park to see the mob. I punished them for going there, by the way,

by giving each of them, 'Odi profanum vulgus—Busby Tickell,' to write out five hundred times. Well, Mr. Clifford, in the thick of the worst ruffians in London, and hitting out right and left, like a prize-fighter, these young gentlemen saw the person I had engaged to assist me with their education. You don't expect, I presume, to be continued in your employment with me, after my learning the style of public meetings your tastes lead you to attend, and the manner in which you behave at them?"

"I expect, Mr. Tickell," said Clifford, rising, "that you will be kind enough to inform me whether you prefer that we should part in a month from now, or at midsummer."

Tickell coughed. "Um—humph—at midsummer! Well, considering the injury that it might do the school to have it get known among the gentlemen who send their sons to me that my senior assistant is a low type of Radical, who sits at the feet of such a person as Bradlaugh, and takes

part in the rows at his meetings, I should certainly say that a month's notice would be most judicious. I don't quite like, however, to send a man adrift in the middle of the term, especially when, as I rather suspect is the case with you, he has not a farthing in the world beyond his salary. So, Mr. Clifford, vile as your politics are: and though you don't know at all how to teach—your boys have simply got demoralized since you have had the charge of them—I'm inclined, on the whole, to act as charitably as possible by you, and keep you on till midsummer. I won't say, but I might even keep you after that, if you gave up going to hear Bradlaugh, and learned, as the Prayer Book has it, to bear yourself lowly and reverently towards those who are Put in authority over you—that's to say, in the present case towards myself—and if you tried also to do your work a little more satisfactorily."

Clifford rose, and walked quietly from the room. He scrawled a resignation of his tutorship in a month from date; and

hastened back with this to Mr. Busby Tickell. "It's a pity, sir," he said, laying the paper on the study-table, "that, after being forty years a schoolmaster, there should still be one important lesson that you have left unlearned."

# "Lesson! Mr Clifford."

"How to add to the scholar a little of the gentleman," said the young man, walking off.

The shrivelled little figure in greasy skull-cap and shapeless coat that he had addressed, stared after him in astonishment and wrath. "Hm—um—what does the fellow mean?" he muttered. "Never was so insulted in my life before; never since-Well, well, awkward reminiscences are best not raked up, perhaps—Don't want to part with him, if I can help it—don't want to part with him, though-Never had a man who worked more conscientiously, and few who have kept better discipline. Not a gentleman!—not a gentleman, did he say? -Um-humph-couldn't deny, though, that I was a scholar."

### CHAPTER VII.

### THE PARABLE OF A FLOWER.

"In another month, then, Clifford, you'll be on the seas?"

"And in another three at the Antipodes, I hope. Yes, my lord, my mind's made up at last. I've a nest-egg of two hundred pounds that my poor father left to me as his eldest son. I'll buy a few acres of land in New Zealand, and turn sheep-farmer."

"And devote yourself for life to skins and tallow? Hang it all, man, that's too bucolic. Can't you take to yourself a Maori squaw; and become a chief among the savages; and fatten missionaries for your brats? Deuce take me! but I think I'll go in for some such programme on my

own account, if I find life get much flatter. There would be some excitement in turning cannibal, even for as blasé a sinner as myself."

The speakers were resting side by side in rather uncomfortable attitudes upon the summit of the Pillar. A rope that trailed down the rock beside them, showed how the last bulwark of precipice had been surmounted. The day was one of the brightest that ever came with the Flowermonth; and from an unclouded sky the noon-sun blazed down hotly on Lord Ralston and young Clifford.

"Turn cannibal, do you say, my lord?" the latter said, in answer to the peer's remark. "The dish the most to your taste, I should imagine, would be a handsome young squaw."

Ralston took a puff or two at his cigar before he answered. "You wouldn't make me chief of the Harem guard, I can see, if you were Grand Turk," he said, at last. "You'd tell me, I suppose, in some such words as I saw lately in a novel—how dull most

novels are, by Jove !-- 'I've no great reliance on sheep-dogs whose fangs are scarcely cleared of wool.' It's the deuce and all, when a man in my position once gets the reputation of being a little of a roué. Let him repent ever so energetically, and try never so heartly to reform, the ill name that he gets in his youth sticks to him till he's gray-haired; unless, perhaps, he should risk taking a chance in the marriagelottery, and it's seen that he wins a woman who's a prize. And I'm not foolhardy enough for such a venture as that; I can't get over the fact that for every prize drawn there are blanks past counting. No, no, by Cupid, I'll live and die a bachelor!"

- "There's a woman-hater in one of Shakespeare's plays, who swears the same, my lord; and next week repents, and takes to himself a wife. I don't remember his name or the name of the play; if Harry had been here he could have told me."
- "O, Benedick, the married man, you mean; and his delicious, 'When I said I would die a bachelor, I did not think I

should live till I were married.' I'm afraid, Clifford, the Swan of Avon might be as dingy a crow as Sheridan Knowles for all you know of his dramatic godship's masterpieces. Why, man, a descendant of the Cumberland Cliffords ought to be better acquainted with the bard who conferred immortality on his ancestors."

"Harry knows enough of Shakespeare's plays to serve for two," said the other, puffing at his meerschaum. "He's the genius of the family; and some day, perhaps, he may take to play-writing himself. It's a pity he should have overworked his brain."

"Bah! he will come all right again with two or three months' rest. Perhaps I'll be able to lend him a helping hand out of his difficulties. But, talking of Benedick, I've no doubt that the poor fellow did, as you say, repent most heartily; but it was when he and 'dear Lady Disdain' had been man and wife for a twelvemonth; and being kept awake all night by curtain-lectures and cradle-rocking he wished he had remained a

bachelor. Confound it, Clifford! I forgot, though, that you are caught yourself in the little god's nets, and have an ambition to become a Benedict. What does Agnes Fleming say to your leaving her to wear the willow-garland while you go a-fortune hunting to the Antipodes?"

"That she'll join me there the moment I have a home to offer her."

"She's an exception to her sex, then," said Ralston. "In her predicament nine out of every ten of the jades would have sighed and sobbed, and begged you to come back as soon as possible; and the day after your ship sailed have put new ribbons in their caps and looked out for another beau. I hope she'll manage to play Joan yet to your Darby, in some New Zealand wigwam. With a well-stocked farm, and Agnes Fleming for a wife; and, at the most, a couple of children, you might live out your threescore and ten years with tolerable satisfaction to yourself."

"And why, at the most, a couple of children, my lord?" said Clifford.

"If anything plays the deuce with the holy state of matrimony," rejoined his Mentor, "it's a pack of brats. To be the mother of a large offspring means ruin of beauty, and souring of temper, and the loss of everything that makes a woman endurable by her husband. 'Love,' says the adage, 'flies out of the window when poverty comes in at the door.' Love, in my opinion, is a deuced sight less averse to poverty's society than to that of a dozen or so of olive-branches. For my part, I'd as soon live in hell as in the bosom of a family of twelve."

"I've heard of one that mustered twice that number."

"What!—four and twenty!—The parents ought to have been put to death for conspiring against the welfare of the State. I've always thought that it was making Eve pay more than dearly for her slip in Paradise to sentence her to bring forth children. Adam, I'll engage, was of the same opinion."

Something in the words seemed to call

up in Clifford's mind a new train of thought. He laid aside his pipe; and lifting himself from the rock on which he was sitting, stood there in the May sunlight, as stalwart a figure as ever reached within a trifle of six feet.

"Paradise," he said, taking off his hat, and letting the fresh west wind that blew on them from the Irish Sea, stir his hair and cool his forehead, "was Paradise, do you think, Lord Ralston, as beautiful as this? If it was, I can understand how Adam felt on leaving it."

For all answer, Ralston rose also to his feet, and stood silently following his companion's glance as it wandered from Scawfell to the sea. The rock upon which the two figures were perched like statues, that grim Pillar of near three thousand feet in altitude which has become the monument of more than one slain climber, commands in clear weather a prospect that to the genuine mountaineer has not the less enchantment because a man must put his neck in some slight risk to look upon it.

This May noontide, earth had shaken from her even her thinnest veil of mist; and glowing with the beauty of summer as a bride with youth, lay blushing in the kisses of the sun, that fell tender upon the green grass of the hillsides, and called sparkles as of fire from the shining surface of the sea. It was one of the mornings when to look upon our English Lakeland is to behold something of the delight of Paradise revealed as in a dream.

Be the face of a woman or of Nature never so lovely and beloved, there seems to shine from it an added beauty in the hour of parting. Not at the moment when the Maker of Eden breathed into the nostrils of its first inhabitant the breath of life, and opening his eyes upon the world of which he was appointed lord, Adam saw around him meadows kindled as it were into a flame of flowers, and the blue of sky and lake, and sunbeams sporting in the gloom of forests; not when a gorgeous day of summer was passing into twilight, and perched upon a drooping rose-spray that bent itself like a

chaplet towards the sleeping bridegroom, the nightingale,—sweeter singer than even sweet Catullus, sang in the ear of him whose senses God had steeped in slumber, "Jam dicetur Hymenæus-Hymen, O, Hvmenæe!" and waking, the happy lover saw beside him the fair creature whose presence was to be the crowning joy of life; neither on the day when he looked first upon sky and earth, nor on that when he received his bride, could Paradise have appeared to Adam so beautiful as in the instant of that yearning gaze when, a fugitive before the inexorable cherubin, he turned while passing through the gate of Eden, and saw sentinelled by flaming swords the dim vistas and Hesperidean fruitage of that world of perfume and colour and verdure in which Love and he had lived together, and which he was never to reenter.

With something of this feeling did the taller of the two figures that had scrambled this Mayday to the summit of the Pillar Rock, suffer his eyes to wander regretfully

over water, and sky, and hill. Of a harsher mood than his brother, James Clifford had all his life disdained as meaningless the words that come to us from the invisible world, and are spoken through the mouths of poets; and the opinion of those who receive them as oracular, he accounted a delusion, and worthy of contempt. In his love of the mountains, however, amongst which he had grown to manhood, he was, unconsciously to himself, a poet; and standing now bareheaded in presence of the goddess, Nature, he felt the beauty that he was parting from almost as a Shelley might have felt it.

"I wonder, my lord," he said to Ralston, "that you, who are as rich as a man can wish to be, don't build yourself a house in Wastdale, and settle down here. For my part, if I had even a couple of hundred a year, New Zealand should never see me."

"Why, you human weathercock," said Ralston, laughing, "it was only this morning that you spoke as if you could bear to stay at Wastdale Head no longer." "It's my grandfather that I want to leave—not Wastdale. You don't think, surely, I'd go fortune-hunting to the Antipodes if I had enough to make me independent of him here."

"Well; and what would be your programme, then?"

"I'd stock a farm, and marry Agnes, and settle down in Cumberland for life."

"As near as possible to the Pillar, I suppose? And in your old age you would replace your grandfather as Patriarch of this precious precipice that we have scrambled up, and risk your eighty-years' old neck upon it every first of May—Eh?" said Ralston.

"Every first of May, my lord! Every day in the week, I think, that I could be sure of such a sight as this. It's Paradise," said Clifford, looking on it with a sigh, and thinking of his approaching banishment.

"Ye—es," answered Ralston, slowly, as he looked from Scawfell and its companiongiants to the distant mere of Ennerdale, and from that to Wastwater and the sea; "and one that has an Eve just suited to it. Your sister's very pretty, Clifford."

Clifford's eyes turned instantly from their contemplation of the warm hues of the Screes, those strangely coloured cliffs that wall in the Burnmoor side of Wastwater, and fixed themselves upon the speaker. "Does your lordship leave us soon?" he said, abruptly.

"When the fancy comes to me to strike my tent. I've pitched it in Wastdale for a month now; before another month is past I may be *en route* for Chamouni or the Tyrol."

"And I for the Antipodes. We might leave together, don't you think, my lord?"

"Can't say—depends on the humour I am in. If I make up my mind to go first to London and then to Switzerland, it's very likely that we might. I'm half inclined, do you know, to devote the summer just commencing to a series of scrambles in the Alps. This "—catching up the rope and preparing to descend—"would be no bad preparation for the Cervin."

Arrived with whole limbs at the Pillarfoot, Clifford halted, and looked back at the columnar summit of the mountain. "I shall see that rock," he said, "while I'm sleeping in my New Zealand hut; and it will stand up before me in my dreams like a gravestone; and I shall read on it—'Sacred to the memory of Anthony Clifford, aged —. Killed here by a fall, May 1st, 18—.' Every May, for years past, Lord Ralston, I have looked for that tragedy to happen."

"Let us hope that the destinies have decided otherwise; and that the Patriarch of the Pillar will die as a patriarch should—of old age, and in his bed," said Ralston. "Your sister—what would the poor girl do if her brothers were wanderers, Heaven knows where, and her grandfather should break his neck?"

"You take a wonderful interest, my lord, in Daisy Clifford."

"Natural, isn't it?" said Ralston, coolly. "Her grandfather was my tutor as a boy; her eldest brother was my playmate; and

the girl herself is as charming as her name."

"Her name!" said Clifford, bitterly. Helooked about him, and seeing some daisies growing at a little distance, went to them, and plucked a few. "Look, my lord." he said, returning, "I am going to take a leaf out of my brother Harry's book, and be poetical. This flower, my lord, was a pretty dainty little thing while it grew where God had placed it; and might have lived its innocent life out quietly enough, if I had not passed here. Now that I have plucked it, what am I to do with the poor daisy? What "-suiting the action to the word—"but tear it petal from petal; and when I have robbed it of all likeness to a flower, fling it in the dirt. There's a daisy in the world, my lord, that, if it were served in this way by a man, I'd come from the farthest ends of the earth to be revenged upon him."

The other had listened to this speech with a strange half-smile upon his lips. "A daisy," he answered, "is too charming a flower to be pulled to bits and trampled upon. If I picked one, it would be to wear it in my bosom."

"A simple little wild-flower like the daisy, my lord! I should have thought a flower from a Belgravian hothouse would have been more to your lordship's taste."

For some minutes the young men walked on in silence.

"You're right, Clifford," Lord Ralston said at last; "if I select a flower for my button-hole, it must be one of rather more pretensions than a simple daisy. I'll go from here next week. And Dallas;—I think, Clifford, there would be no harm done if our friend the baronet left Wastdale too,"

## CHAPTER VIII.

## HARRY CLIFFORD.

"I wonder what spirit of paradox first possessed me with the wish that my Puritan cousin, this Spartan of the days of the Second Empire, should meet and learn to love my sister Daisy. Two more perfectly contrasted beings—he born a Puritan and trained a soldier, she a mixture of passion and gaiety; laughing in look, but with blue, deep dreamy eyes; as coquettish of speech as Rosalind, as passionate at heart as Juliet—it would be impossible to conceive. I have a belief in the mating that is born of contrast—in pairing off the impetuous spirit with the gentle; a keen eye with a dreamy one; the eagle with

the dove; and therefore would I have of the future this gift, that Louis and Margaret should meet, and learn to love each other.

"A human rock; only at the gentle touch of a woman whom he tenderly loves does this piece of Cevennois granite ever vield like the crag of Meribah to the rod of Moses, and the living water of affection flow forth abundantly. What a happy woman will she be who wins him for her husband! Your men of sunny tempers and light, impressionable natures are excellent as mere companions; but she whom one of the tribe has persuaded to matrimony finds presently that his light does not shine on her alone, but, as heretofore, for all her sisterhood besides. Were I a woman, my choice should be rather of an eye that, stern to the rest of the world, grew tender as it looked in mine; of a heart that, although called by many hard and cold, I, who had won its deepest devotion, found ever tender and true and loving. It is my undoubting belief that, of Shakespeare's women, Desdemona, while Othello trusted her, was happier than ever Romeo would have made Juliet.

"Would my Puritan cousin be made happy had my sister Daisy such a loving look for him, as, according to the poets, the flower her namesake turns upon the While Louis has been training in sun. the Prytanée de la Flèche and the École Polytechnique for campaigns like the tremendous one that he predicts for this very year, Daisy has budded peacefully into womanhood among the rocks of Wastdale. The pant of the boy's heart has been for glory; the fancies of the girl have turned to love. Ever since she was of an age to find a voice in Nature, the birds, and winds, and waters, nay, the very leaves that murmur at her window have whispered to Margaret of love. Sitting on summer evenings beside her favourite rose-tree, with a volume of Tennyson as her companion, she has given herself over to the glamour of imagination and her favourite poetry, till the country round was turned to fairyland, and on Wastwater there

seemed to float a boat with the dead form of Elaine, and over Burnmoor came riding a company of Arthur's knights, and the garden itself was changed as by the magic of Merlin to that legendary one where the Lord of Burleigh wooed his village bride. A pity that Louis should never have come to us in Wastdale. This laughing, passionate, tender girl, bewitching of face and mind, gay yet gentle, high-spirited, but altogether womanly, would surely be such a wild-flower as even a Puritan might wish to gather. Such a heart, too, as that of Louis Roland, while it can be given but once would be given for life. A pity, I say again, that his life's path has always kept him so far from Wastdale. To have seen Daisy choosing him as her knight; and he, like some Tristram or Lancelot of Arthurian legend, bringing from his battlefields the laurels he had plucked there, and casting them at the feet of the lady of his love—Eheu! Like my sister over her volume of Tennyson in the dear old garden, I have for this hour and more been dreaming dreams."

Clifford put aside his journal with a sigh; and rose to set off for his day's work in the Kensington school. And still—walking across Kensington Gardens in the early morning, with the freshness of the Maytime green above him, and the blue sky laughing overhead—the dream he had conjured up was with him, and he murmured to himself, "Daisy is a veritable Psyche—a butterfly-like creature with an almost dangerous capacity for love. Will the day ever come when she shall bestow that love upon Louis Roland?—will the honeysuckle learn to twine its tendrils round the rock?"

The last day of May was to see him take leave of the drudgery that he loathed. He looked forward to that event, as an Israelite, weary of baking bricks in Eygpt, might have looked forward to the morning when he should arise, and with Pharaoh and his chariots thundering behind him, flee forth into the desert and to freedom. Want, perhaps, would presently and sharply dog his heels; but anything—anything was

better than drudging on as for months now he had done.

It chanced this May afternoon that, when lessons were over and he had taken his hat to leave, he was standing at the schoolroom window, looking out on the brightness of the opening summer, and thinking some such thoughts as these. The boys, newly released from their tasks, were playing round him, noisy and unheeded; and one more daring than his fellows, seeing the abstraction of the figure at the window, seized presently on a piece of chalk, and began to attempt on the blackboard a caricature of the usher. The laughter and applause that greeted his efforts roused Clifford from his fit of musing; and seeing what was going on, he smiled, and moved away towards the door, not judging it welltimed to take any notice of the boyish freak.

Outside that door stood at the moment Mr. Busby Tickell. A care to keep himself conversant with the details of the daily life of his establishment was the main feature of the educational system perfected by this

gentleman; and towards the attainment of his object list slippers and keyholes had for many years now greatly assisted him. "Listeners," says the proverb, "seldom hear good of themselves." Mr. Tickell never had in all the years that he had pursued the practice of eavesdropping; but with a noble disregard of self he seized every opportunity to look and listen still.

He pushed open the door, and showed himself suddenly to the approaching Clifford.

- "Wha—what, sir," he began;—pointing to the caricature on the board, and stammering in his haste and anger—what do you mean by letting a boy insult you with such a thing as that? It's silly, sir—you must be as silly as he is to let him do it. Stop, sir!"—seeing the other about to speak—"I won't be answered, Mr. Clifford—I won't be answered, do you hear?"
- "But, Mr. Tickell," the young man began, a little hotly.
- "I won't be answered, I tell you!—I won't have you raise your voice to me," Tickell interrupted, his own mounting almost

to a scream. "There never was man or boy in this establishment before you who dared to raise his voice to me."

One of the boys standing near him greeted the statement with a whistle. Tickell turned on him and shook him fiercely, until both he and the boy were out of breath.

"Ugh!" he gasped, releasing him—"the gallows-ugh!-will stop that breath of yours for you, if you go on wasting it in whistling. There never was or will be a boy who is fond of whistling, but he would do something to deserve the gallows when he grew to be a man. It's the proof of a low nature—a nature that will commit the worst crime in the Newgate Calendar. You laugh, do vou, Mr. Clifford?" facing sharp on his assistant. "It's well for you, let me tell you, sir, that age has only left me able to say, with Horace, 'Non ego hoc ferrem calidâ juventâ.' If I were still what I was forty years ago, you would be in some danger of receiving that which you much need, and I'm sorry I'm unable to give you -a lesson in good manners."

Clifford, in spite of all his experience of the peculiarities of Mr. Busby Tickell, stared at him in some surprise. "Do you mean, sir," he said, "that you would thrash me?"

"Yes—sir." The speaker shuffled out the words one by one, and shuffled at the same time towards the door. "Thrash you till you were brought to behave with proper respect to a man nearly three times your age, and who, in addition, is what the years of Methuselah would never make you—a scholar and a gentleman."

He was moving away, chuckling at his retort, when the other put himself between him and the door.

"A moment, Mr. Tickell," he said, shutting it. "Do I understand you to charge me with failing to treat you with due respect?—with all the respect, that is to say, that is due to a consideration of your age and the position we stand in to each other?"

"I say, sir, that you are a ruffian—a low ruffian."

"Then, sir," said the young man, hotly,

"you say what is as false as your life has been for many years past."

"You—you lying young atheist!" Tickell broke out, gesticulating in a new access of fury.

"Stop, sir," said the other, decisively; "it's my turn now to speak. An atheist, do you call me? Certainly, if anything could make me doubt of God, it would be the consideration that it is possible for such a person as yourself to be entrusted with the care of the minds of the young. A liar. am I? No; but were I one, the sight of the daily lie you make your life would give me for the rest of mine a love of the truth, I think." He stopped; controlled himself with an evident effort; and went on, more calmly, "I have been with you now for four months, and your unfitness for the position you hold has grown every day more unpleasantly evident. It is to be hoped, for the sake of the youth of this country, that there are not many such schools as this in 1t, under the care of such men as you."

Tickell glared on him as if he had thought

his eye a basilisk's, and capable of darting venom. "Non ego—hoc ferrem—Consule Planco," he muttered, incoherently.

The other, who had walked to a window and stood looking out of it for a moment, now came back. "Is there anything to be gained, sir, by prolonging this discussion?" he said, more quietly. "I should think, for my part, that we had better adjourn it to some fitter time and place."

In his turn, the elder man made an effort to recover control of himself. "Yes, Mr. Clifford," he said; "yes—you are right; there can be no further discussion between you and me after what has passed this morning. If you have any communication to make to me in the few days that you are still to pollute this place with your presence—even if it should be on the business of the school—write it down, sir, and send it in to me. Don't, on any pretence, seek to speak to me; I'd rather talk with a ruffian from the streets. I'll find a time to express my sentiments of your conduct—yes, I'll find a time—and it shall be when any man who

may be mistaken enough to think that your services would be of value to him, applies to me for the character of the ruffian I have had the misfortune to employ."

"As you please, sir," said the other, moving off. He walked out into the street, and home to his lonely lodging, brooding with a curious, morbid bitterness over what had been said, and the character of him who said it. This man an instructor of youth! This man, whose mind was one crazed whirl of meanness and conceit, entrusted with the task of forming the minds of others!

He sat long, thinking confusedly and cynically; and at last snatched his hat again, and going out, took the way to the river-side, and halting half-way across Westminster Bridge, gazed long and earnestly down on the black river eddying below. The night was dull for May; but from a rift in the clouds above him the moon Peered just then with a wild and frightened glance, as if to see what things were done in London.

A light touch on the arm roused him from the train of gloomy thought into which he had fallen. He started; and turning, saw himself face to face with one of the wretched creatures who prowl by night about the streets of cities, and who change night by night from women into—the hospital and the dead-house can best say what.

It was a girl of nineteen or twenty, very thin and haggard; her shame blushing even through the paint that daubed her cheek. She said nothing; and looked at him with an eye eloquent rather of want than of any baser feeling.

"Poor creature!" he thought, half-cynically, half-compassionately. He pointed to the river. "You look as if you had some thoughts of showing me the way down there," he said, abruptly.

The girl shuddered, and shook her head. "No, no," she said; "not that!"

"And what, then? Is it so very pleasant to live as you do?"

She made no answer, but, gathering her thin shawl about her, moved away.

He hastily took out what money was in his purse; and striding after her, thrust it into her hand; and, with a hurried "Goodnight," passed on.

"It is strange," he said to himself, in a half-cynical, half-resentful tone; "however hard a man's life may be, he is sure to find, if he only looks round him, women eating bread more bitter than his own. And, after all, what have I to complain of? Only that I am poor and ill; and that, instead of having won for myself a name in literature, I am but an usher in a school."

## CHAPTER IX.

## A HALF-HOUR WITH TENNYSON.

- "What a lovely sunset there is this evening, Daisy! I wonder if I shall see such clouds as those in New Zealand."
- "Oh, prettier ever so much," said Daisy.
  "New Zealand people see a great deal more of the sun than we do; so, of course, they must have finer sunsets."
- "What, finer than those clouds look just above the Pillar? If Harry was here, he'd be spouting poetry about them."
- "Yes," said Daisy, "he'd fetch out Shelley, and read a verse or two from a poem called 'The Cloud.' There's something in it about sunset, I remember, and the crimson pall of eve, and a number of descriptions that I can't quite recollect of

meteor eyes, and golden wings, and loves and doves. Oh, Jim, I often wish, as somebody does in the Bible, that I had wings like a dove!"

"And where would you fly to, Daisy?"

"I'd go to London first, and see what Harry was about; and then I'd fly on to Switzerland, I think, and take just a peep at Lord Ralston as he was climbing up some snow-mountain in the Alps, all glaciers and precipices, and holes that a man might fall into and his dead body never be found; and then I'd put my wings over my eyes for fear I should see him fall, and hurry off as fast as I could to be in time for tea at your farmhouse in New Zealand. There, Jim!" said Daisy, laughing.

Her brother, however, looked at her very seriously. "Daisy," he said, "you are my sister; and I think you are a good, modest girl at heart; but I can't help wishing that God had given you a little more prudence along with all your prettiness."

Daisy ran up to him, and put her hand upon his mouth. "Now, Jim," she said, a

little pettishly, "don't scold. It would be wicked of us to quarrel the night before you leave Wastdale to go to a country that's so many thousands of miles away."

"We won't quarrel, Daisy, I hope," said Clifford, releasing his lips from the seal that she had placed upon them—as charming a hand as ever a lover's fingers thrilled to touch. "It's not a scolding that I mean to give you; but only a question that I want to ask. My dear little sister,"—taking her hand in his-"I shall sail for New Zealand with an easier mind than I have had for weeks past, if you can look me in the face as we stand here together, and assure me upon your honour that nothing no words, I mean, of course—have passed between you and Lord Ralston or Dallas that you would not be willing for all your relatives to know of; and that neither of the two is anything more to you than an acquaintance."

The girl blushed, and looked upon the ground. "Lord Ralston is—is more than an acquaintance, I should think," she said,

unsteadily. "He has shown himself a friend to you and Harry."

"A friend!" said Clifford, sharply. He looked at her with angry suspicion for a moment, as she stood, blushing and silent, before him; and then dropped her hand, and turned away into the house. re-appeared almost immediately, holding several letters in his hand. "See," he said, showing them to the astonished girl, "these are the letters Lord Ralston wrote me yesterday—the notes of introduction to his friends in London that he thinks can help me with their advice or influence in my plans about New Zealand. If you can't swear to me this instant that Ralston has never dared to insult you-I won't mince matters, Daisy-by any proposals such as honest girls think shame to listen to, I'll take them to him with the message that I Want no kindnesses from the man who has sought to ruin my sister; and I'll write to Harry rather to beg his bread in the streets than accept any employment that Ralston offers him. Good heavens! is it possible that, after the talk we had a week ago, and his promise to leave here to-morrow, Lord Ralston can have been trying to tempt you to your ruin!"

Frightened by his violent outburst, his sister shrank away from him, and burst into tears. "You wicked, wicked monster!" she sobbed out passionately. "How dare you think that Lord Ralston would say such wicked things to me! How dare you tell me I would listen to him if he did!"

"God forbid I should think that you would listen to him, Daisy. If I did," said Clifford, with savage emphasis, "I'd kill you, or him, or both. What I want to know is, has he spoken? Tell me," he continued, stepping forward and grasping her by the arm, "did Lord Ralston, in the five weeks that he has been in Wastdale now, ever dare to insult you by any dishonourable proposal?"

"Never, never," the girl said, through her tears.

"Did he ever talk as if he were in love with you?"

"Ye—yes," hesitatingly. "Once he made me think that he cared for me a little. Oh, Jim," with fresh distress, "let me go—you'll break my arm."

"Better that than this roue of a lord should break your heart. Tell me, Daisy, what was it that Lord Ralston said to you?"

"He—he found me in the garden here one evening reading Tennyson; and asked me—Oh, Jim," bursting once more into tears, "you'll break my arm—you will, indeed."

"There, then," Clifford said, releasing her. "Now, miss, a full and true account of your garden-talk—a true one, mind."

"There was nothing wrong in it, there was not, indeed," the girl said, earnestly. "I was sitting out here one evening quite alone, as I thought—on the seat in the corner there, under the old apple-tree—when all at once I heard Lord Ralston's voice say, 'Two poets in a family, eh, Miss Daisy?' and he was standing behind me, I found, looking over my shoulder to see what

I was reading. And then—and then"—hesitating for a moment in her narrative—"he sat down under the apple-tree beside me; and we began talking about Tennyson."

"Curse Tennyson! What was it Ralston said that made you fancy he was in love with you?"

"I didn't say he was in love with me," Daisy cried, her cheeks all scarlet. "I only said I thought he cared for me a little."

"Yes—I understand—admired you as any man might a very pretty girl. So he sat down; and read love-poetry to you out of Tennyson, I suppose?"

"He didn't; no one ever read Tennyson to me but Harry. He only asked me if I liked the poem I was reading, and what I thought of it."

"And you went off at once, of course, into such gushing raptures, as every girl nowadays thinks it her duty to come out with when Tennyson's in question. Was it 'Enoch Arden' you were reading?"

"It—it was the 'Lord of Burleigh.'"

"The 'Lord of Burleigh!' What, that

silly ballad in which a noblemau disguises himself as a travelling sign-painter or something of the sort; and runs away with a village girl, and marries her? Oh, it's a charming poem, that! so very natural in its descriptions of how peers of the realm are accustomed to behave to the country girls they take a fancy to. I wish the devil had Tennyson and every other poet that ever scribbled verses—except, perhaps, Burns and Longfellow. And so Ralston asked your opinion of the 'Lord of Burleigh,' did he? I can guess the answer he would get. You told him you thought it the most beautiful thing that Alfred Tennyson ever Wrote."

"I never thought of telling him anything half so silly. The 'Lord of Burleigh' is not to be compared to 'Locksley Hall,' and 'In Memoriam,' or even to some of the descriptions in the 'Idylls.' I only said I thought it strange that the Lady of Burleigh, when she was so happy, and her husband loved her so devotedly, should have pined away and died."

"Rather a sensible thing for a girl to se who's so fond of reading Tennyson. there's anything more absurd in the 'Lo of Burleigh' than the gentleman's marria it's the description of the lady's deat Upon my word, Daisy, you're not such sentimental little woman as I thought yo Well; and what did Ralston say to yo criticism?"

"He sat looking at the ground for suc a time that I thought he had nothing monto say to me, and went on reading. A at once," continued Daisy, blushing, "hturned to me, and said, 'What makes you think, Miss Clifford, that the Lady of Burleigh should have lived? You are fond o gardening, are you not? If you took wild-flower from the fell or the moor—daisy, say, or a tuft of heather—and planted it in your garden here, among your rose and geraniums, the poor flower would withe away, I suppose?'

- "'It might, Lord Ralston,' I said.
- "'And you would despise it, would you not?' he asked me. 'When you saw the

humble little blossom lost among a crowd of garden flowers; and looking as much out of place as you, Miss Daisy, in your modest country dress, would look among a crowd of half-dressed fashionables in a ball-room. would you not wish that you had left it to live on quietly where God had placed it?' And then, without giving me time to answer, he said, 'Miss Clifford, I've sometimes had thoughts of asking a wild-flower that I saw among the rocks—the prettiest little plant, I think, that ever grew thereto let me transplant it from the hill-side into a conservatory. But I'm afraid that, like the lady in Tennyson's poem, the poor little flower would "droop and droop;" and I'm sadly afraid, too, that even if it throve in its new home, and looked as pretty among London smoke as here in Wastdale, I'd tire of it in course of time, and wish that I had chosen instead a rose or lily. I must not forget, either, that, for anything I know, the flower I am speaking of may have struck such deep root in its native earth that it would be unwilling to let me

take it from it. So I think, Miss Daisy, as I have taken such a fancy to the little wildflower, and can't offer to buy, and would be ashamed to try to steal it, I'll do as others in the same difficulty have done before me, and run away.' He looked at me as he finished; and saw, I suppose, by my blushing that I understood him; for the only other thing he said was, 'Good evening, Miss Daisy; believe me, Tennyson was right in making his heroine die; and the Lord of Burleigh would have done much better had he left the village maiden that he married to become the wife of some honest farmer.' Then Lord Ralston went off: and I saw nothing more of him for quite two days."

Clifford drew a quick breath of relief. "I'm glad—I'm very glad," he said, "to find that Lord George is not a scoundrel. Rumour may say of him what it pleases; and Dallas may throw out hints behind his back as to girls that he has ruined; I'll believe, for the future, that neither common report nor the baronet has told me quite the

truth of Ralston. I'd rather, certainly, he had not spoken to you at all; but, at least, he managed it delicately. Did it tantalize you, Daisy, to find that you were so near and yet so far from becoming a second Lady Burleigh; and although your bright eyes had brought a nobleman to your feet, he was determined rather to get up and run away than to follow up the loss of his heart by making an offer of his hand?"

"It didn't vex me in the least. I never dreamt of being Lady Ralston. If his lord-ship were to ask me whether I would marry him, I'd say 'No.'"

"You don't mean to tell me that you wouldn't have him? I should have thought a girl so fond of novel-reading and Tennyson's poetry would have been prepared to fall in love at ten minutes' notice with the first peer she set her eyes on."

"It shows how little you know of either Tennyson or the girls that read him that you should fancy so. He says in one of his best pieces—and I quite agree with the sentiment—

'Kind hearts are more than coronets,
And simple faith than Norman blood.'

Not," said Daisy, tossing up her head, "that in the present case the lines apply. We Cliffords are of Norman blood; and know ourselves to be descendants of the old Lords Clifford who fought for the Red Rose in the wars between Lancaster and York. As for Lord Ralston, the most his lordship can claim is that he is descended from Adam and Eve; and that his grandfather, the son of nobody knows who, was made a peer by George IV."

"He might hint, though, that the grandfather you think so little of left his heirs a fortune of £15,000 per annum; and that ours has a yearly income of something like two hundred pounds—the greater part of it being an annuity that will die when he does. I fancy, Daisy, that Lord Ralston's modern coronet would fetch a good deal more than our old name, if they were both put up to auction."

"I wish the world were what it was in

the days of the Plantagenets," said Daisy, plaintively.

"You might just as well wish, as Harry does, that it were what it was in the days of the Greeks. For my part, if I prosper at the Antipodes, it won't disturb me in the least to reflect that my manslaughtering old ancestors who shore off heads in the Wars of the Roses would hold that by getting an honest living at sheep-shearing I was dishonouring their name. When I've made a fortune in New Zealand, Daisy, I'll come back to England, and buy a coach for you and Harry, and paint the Clifford arms upon its panels to please you, my little aristocrat. As for me, I'm quite content to go all my life on foot or on horseback."

"I'm not. I'd like to have a carriage and be called Lady——." The girl stopped suddenly, and turned a frightened glanco upon her brother.

"Lady! Lady what? You told me just now," said Clifford, sharply, "that if Lord Ralston were to offer marriage to you, you

would refuse him. Have you changed your mind already?"

For all answer, Daisy buried her face in her hands, and wept hysterically.

"Do you hear me?" the young man said, with some impatience. "Am I to understand, after all, that you are disappointed because you cannot be Lady Ralston?"

The girl turned suddenly, and looked up wildly in his face. "Oh, Jim," she said, "take me with you to New Zealand! I—I'm miserable here in Wastdale."

"So you own it, then—Ralston has contrived to make you love him."

"I care nothing for Lord Ralston. I only think of him as an acquaintance. Indeed—indeed, I never dreamt of marrying him. He doesn't love me, Jim; he only fancies that he does. If he really loved me—if he had given me all his heart—he never could have left Wastdale without finding out whether I loved him in return; and if I had owned I did, he would have given me

no peace till he had made me either his mistress or his wife. Oh, I know!—that — that is, thinking about what I have read has shown me—how impossible it is for a man who is passionately fond of a girl to avoid telling her that he cares for her; and trying to win her affection in return. You should know it, too—you, who are in love, you say, with Agnes Fleming."

"I wish to heaven you had a little of Agnes Fleming's common-sense! What do you mean by all this outcry about men making the women they are in love with either their mistresses or their wives? Do you think a man who had given his whole heart to a woman would try to ruin her?"

"If she were so much beneath him in station that he could not marry her, he might."

"Then he'd deserve a bullet through his head; and I, for one, would say that the brother or father who shot him, had only put out of the world a scoundrel who was a nuisance in it. Look here, Daisy, I don't half like your style of talk this evening.

Why do you want me to take you to New Zealand?"

"Because—because—oh, Jim, I wish you would not ask me questions!—I told you that I wanted to leave Wastdale because I am miserable here."

"Two months ago you used to declare that Wastdale was the only place on earth you could ever care to live in. Do you know what sort of life mine will be at first, in the part of New Zealand I am going to? Harder, I expect, than that of an English agricultural labourer. If you went with me, you would have to put away your books and drawing, and live the life, and do the work, of a domestic servant."

"Better work hard across the seas," said Daisy, between her sobs, "than feel as I have done of late. Oh, James, take me with you. I'll pack up what I want to night; and to-morrow morning we'll both start for London."

"And our grandfather?" said the brother
"The old man would not live six months without you."

- "He could come to us in New Zealand, as soon as we were fairly settled there," said Daisy, eagerly.
- "What, at eighty-one years old cross thirteen thousand miles of ocean. You talk, Daisy, as if Tennyson or some of the other poets whose nonsense you put into your silly little head had stolen away your brains. Have you sense enough left, do you think, to answer me a couple of simple questions? Why are you miserable in Wastdale? and what has possessed you all at once with this violent desire to go with me to New Zealand?"

The girl drooped down her head, and made no answer.

- "You have told me twice over that you don't care for Ralston. On your word of honour, is that true?"
  - "Yes," she said faintly.
- "You don't feel the least affection for him?"
  - "None-none!"
- "And if he made an offer of marriage to you, you would refuse it?"

- "I would thank him for the honour that he wished to do me, and tell him that I could not care enough for him ever to become his wife. No, it is not disappointment at not being Lady Ralston, that has made me miserable. You'd scold me if I told you what the reason was."
  - "What, is it something foolish, then?"
- "Foolish to a man, perhaps. I'm miserable because Harry's away in London; and you are going to New Zealand; and I'll be left in Wastdale quite by myself."
- "But, Daisy, you'll have grandfather still with you. The old man prizes you more than all the rest of the world put together; you are the only creature in it that he really cares for."
- "Yes, I know," said Daisy, eagerly; "but—but having grandfather still with me is not as if I had a brother. I can't talk with him, Jim, as I do with you or Harry. Oh, I wish that I could go with you to New Zealand! I was singing Mrs. Hemans' Graves of a Household' to myself, the other evening; and when I came to the line—

'Their graves are severed far and wide,'

I thought of my two brothers and myself, and began to cry as if my heart would break. Our graves will be far apart, too; when you are both of you gone from Wastdale, I shall feel as if I am never to see either Harry or you again. Oh, do, please, take me to New Zealand."

Clifford drew the sobbing girl to him, and kissed her. "You silly, hysterical little woman. You are too tender a little wildflower, Daisy, to bear transplanting across all those miles of sea," he said. "Look, there's Dallas coming from the house. Run round the box-tree; and get in before he sees us, or he'll wonder what has made you cry so bitterly."

The new-comer, however, was close upon them almost before Daisy had made a motion to obey. "Good evening, Miss Clif——" he began, as she brushed past him. "Why, she's crying, Clifford. Wishes you were not going to New Zealand, I suppose."

"Wishes, rather," said Clifford, "that she

were going with me. Daisy has taken it into her head that she would like to be an emigrant."

Something distrustful seemed to look out of Dallas's light-coloured eyes as he listened. "That's a strange wish for a girl of her age," he answered. "Is it because she can't bear to lose her brother? or because she has some reason for not caring to remain in Wastdale?"

"And what reason," said the other sharply, "should my sister have for desiring to leave Wastdale?"

"Why, she might be tired of the place; or," continued Dallas, in a tone delicately balanced between an insinuation and a sneer, "of the twenty or thirty clod-hoppers who make up its inhabitants. When you and Ralston and myself are gone there won't be a human being in the neighbourhood fit for Miss Clifford to associate with. It's like leaving a pearl among a litter of pigs to leave her here. How she'd shine, Clifford, in a ball-room! It's a pity Ralston isn't a marrying man."

- "And why a pity, may I ask?"
- "Why, if he had been that sort of fellow, he'd have joined himself to Miss Clifford in holy matrimony, you may be sure. The deuce! it's plain enough how infatuated he is about her. A lucky thing, perhaps, for your sister's peace of mind that he's leaving Wastdale. He might have felt tempted to misconduct himself when you were no longer here to play dragon over the golden fruit."
- "Do you mean me to understand, Sir Thomas, that you look upon Lord Ralston as a scoundrel?"
- "A scoundrel? That's according to the light you take it in," said Dallas, carelessly. "All I say is, that there are families in the world where Ralston's name is not exactly mentioned with a blessing; and that if he fancied himself in love with a sister of mine, I'd keep as sharp a watch upon her as if I were an Oriental and she was the reigning beauty of my harem."

Clifford seemed to meditate a while before he answered. "If I did not fully believe," he said, at last, "that you have spoken from a friendly motive, I should resent what you have just said as an insult. My sister, perhaps, has something more than an average share of beauty, and perhaps, too, Lord Ralston sees it; but the one I hold to be an honourable man, and the other a modest and pure-minded girl. I think, Dallas, we had better drop the subject."

"One question, Clifford, and I've said the little I wanted to say. Do you think Miss Clifford is at all in love with Ralston?"

"No more than she's in love with you," said Clifford. "An hour ago I was beginning to fancy that she had allowed herself to care for him too much for her peace of mind; but after talking with her I can see that I was wrong. Now, if you please, we'll drop the subject. Shall we go in, and ask Daisy to sing us for the last time one of her favourites from Moore?"

"'The Young May Moon,' if I may have my choice," said Dallas, lightly. He pointed to the lustrous crescent that gleamed white and solemn from the star-sown banner of the sky. "She looks to-night exactly as I

remember seeing her three years ago, when Ralston introduced me to Wastdale, and as we came across Burnmoor in the twilight we saw her rising higher and higher over the mountains there."

"'The Young May Moon'-well, ask her, if you like," said Clifford, absently. He had turned for a moment on the threshold of the house; and as his eyes drank in the beauty of the scene before him, and he saw night resting like a shadow upon the mountains, and the faint moonbeams casting a solemn whiteness upon the waters of the lake, something tender and loving came like light into his face, and gave it for a moment the beauty that, of a summer's morning, the risen sunlight gives to a rock on which its rays have newly fallen. "Perhaps," he said in a whisper to himself, as he turned away into the house, "when I am older by forty years or so, and all whom I have loved are in the grave, I may pay one more visit to Wastdale before I go to join them, and watch the May moon rise above the mountains;

and remember how many, many tir when Daisy and I were young, we h stood out in the garden here, and looked to her bonny face."

## CHAPTER X.

## "LOVES ME-LOVES ME NOT."

"So you wanted James to take you to New Zealand; and he would only agree to bring you as far as London, and leave you here with me. What made you take such a wild wish into that little mind of yours, Daisy?" And Harry Clifford looked curiously at his sister.

The pair were together in their pretty sitting-room, or, rather, in Daisy's; for Clifford, on the unexpected visit of the sister he idolized, had rushed off at once to seek a lodging that might be suited for her; and, lavish of expense on all but himself, had provided a set of dainty little rooms duly stocked with flowers and a piano. Daisy was sitting at this last when

her brother spoke to her, and drawing from the instrument bright little trills of melody; for it pleased her better than the old, wheezy, jingling one in her grandfather's house in Wastdale, and she had a soul that rejoiced in music. It was but two days since the elder of her two brothers had sailed for New Zealand, and although he was by no means her favourite, she had been profuse of tears at parting from him; but the glorious eyes were dry now, and all trace of grief had vanished from that laughing, mischievous face.

But at Clifford's question a shadow came across her face again, and the blue eyes looked strangely at him. "As if you did not know!" she answered, with a pout "I told James, and I am sure he has tolyou."

"But what could he tell me, Daisy-Only of the wild fancy that you took in—that pretty head—he could give me reason why you should have taken it."

- "Yes; for I gave him a reason."
- "That you would feel miserable left

Wastdale with only grandfather, when there were thirteen thousand miles of sea between James and you. Was that a reason for going to New Zealand with him? You had still me left."

"Yes, Harry—but—but— Oh, I wish you would not worry me with these questions!"

Clifford's face put off the indulgent expression that it had worn till now, and assumed instead a look that was almost one of sternness. "Daisy," he said, "you have every manner of charming quality; but I can't reckon among them a habit of being frank with those who best deserve your confidence. Why should my questions worry you? You had nothing, you told James, in the shape of a love-secret to conceal."

His sister rose from the piano, and turned towards him with cheeks burning with blushes, and a look in which anger seemed to contend with triumph. "So he did tell you all, then," she said. "You know that Lord Ralston learned to care for me just

enough to make him run away from me, but not enough to make him wish to marry me. Is not that sufficient?—or must I go over the whole story again for your benefit? Don't you think, Harry, that it may not be quite the pleasantest thing in the world for a girl like me to have to tell how a man like Lord Ralston contrived to let her know that he thought her pretty, but that she was too much beneath him in station for him to honour her with an offer of marriage?"

"Is not that rather a prejudiced view of his conduct, Daisy? James told me that he had behaved delicately and honourably in the matter."

"Honourably!—delicately!" Daisy repeated the words with great scorn; and then flinging herself on a sofa, and bursting into tears—"Why did he insult me with his love?" she sobbed. "Why could he not have gone away from Wastdale as he came—an old friend of the family and nothing more. He was a coward to tell me in the way he did that he loved me,

and yet was about to run away from me. If I had been a man, I would have bitten my tongue out before it should have made such a declaration to the woman who had won my heart."

"But he had not lost his heart to you—he had only been taken with a fancy for your face. And yet, Daisy, you are right; he did a wrong thing in speaking to you, however delicately he conveyed his reasons why he thought it best to leave you. It was our brother that he should have spoken to."

"And if I had been James," said Daisy, Vehemently, "and he had come to me with the story of his mean love for my sister, I should have answered, 'My lord,——'" She stopped; set her teeth firmly together, and then, looking strangely at her brother, took his hand, and laid it on her hot forehead—"Harry, I am ill," she said, wearily. "Let me go to my own room for an hour or two, and lie down."

In some alarm—for his sister's health was delicate, and he had a double portion of vol. 1.

that over-tenderness with which many very manly natures are apt to cherish a woman dear to them, Clifford attended Daisy to her room; and darkening it, sat by her, trying to drive away with eau-de-cologne the sudden headache she complained of. He said no more to her that day of Lord Ralston, whatever might in secret be his anxiety to arrive at a complete understanding with his sister on the subject of the young peer's attentions to her; and the name had not again been mentioned between them, when, late the following afternoon, a knock at their sitting-room door and an invitation to come in were followed by the entrance of Ralston himself.

"How are you, Clifford?" he began, while the other looked at him in openmouthed astonishment, scarcely believing his eyes. "Miss Daisy, London smoke does not seem to agree with you so well as Cumberland air—you have lost already something of the complexion you brought with you only a week ago from Wastdale. But you don't look extremely pleased to

see me, Clifford. I hope I haven't intruded at an unlucky time."

Clifford, instead of answering, looked searchingly at the speaker; for strange suspicions were rising in his mind; and then with something of mistrust at his sister. Daisy's cheeks flushed to scarlet, and she turned her head away.

"May I ask, my lord," her brother at last said, coldly, "to what I am indebted for the honour of this visit?"

"Honour of this visit! Well, I'm glad you take it in that light," said Ralston, laughing. "I had intended it, possibly, to be one of profit to you; but since you consider it an honour also, no doubt you find it more agreeable than your looks would seem to indicate. But seriously, Clifford, I have a matter of business to talk over with you, if you can spare me ten minutes of your time, and your sister will excuse us for so long. I can't hope that it will interest you, Miss Daisy, to be made a partner to the matter; and yet I hardly like to take your brother away from you."

Daisy, quick to take a hint, and evidently anxious to retire, rose at once, and left the two young men together. When she was gone, Ralston walked up straight to Clifford, and looked him coolly in the face. "I thank you, Mr. Clifford," he said, "for the supposition that it seems from your manner to me you are good enough to wrong me with."

"If you mean, Lord Ralston, that I suspect your visit to be paid rather to my sister than myself, you are not far from the truth."

"It's the weakness of you poets that you can never reason out conclusions, but always jump at them. Seeing me here to-day, you suspect at once that I am in some sort of communication with your sister, and have received your address from her; when, if you had taken the trouble to think for a moment, you must have known that your brother gave it to me. Did he not tell you that he had given it to me, and why I wanted it?"

A light broke suddenly on Clifford's mind. "He certainly spoke of an appointment that your lordship had talked of offering me; but——"

"Not that I had talked of offering you; but that I told him I should be happy to use my interest to secure for you. It's to tell you that it's at your service if you will accept it that I have come here this morning."

A silence of a few moments followed, and then was broken by Clifford. "Many thanks, my lord," he said slowly; "but I am afraid that, while acknowledging your kindness, I must decline it."

"Clifford, you are a fool," the young peer said, abruptly. "God knows that my life has not been what it should have been; but I am not scoundrel enough to have ever for a moment had a design upon your sister's peace of mind. And if I had, they would have been vain—she's a good girl in the first place, and in the second she does not care for me."

"You have tried your best, at least, to

make her care for you," her brother answered, bitterly.

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"As I am an honest man, no! I was attracted by her pretty face—that I confess—and I dangled about Wastdale for a month and more trying to make up my mind whether I was in love with her or not; but I never spoke a word to her that you might not have been by to listen to. She cannot hear us, can she?"

"No," said the other, after ascertaining that the door through which Daisy had passed was closed.

"Well, then, I'll make free confession to you. I wanted to ascertain clearly what my feelings were towards your sister; and I have spent the eight or ten days that have passed since I left Wastdale in finding out. I know now that, though she has wonderfully impressed my fancy, she has not touched my heart, and that it would be misery to both of us to marry. I should tire of her in a year or two, and repent the sacrifice that I had made in wedding her; and she—if she could take me for my posi-

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tion; and I don't do her the injustice of thinking that she would—why, I fancy she would contrive in even less time to make me feel very keenly that it was my rank she cared for, and not myself."

"So that, if I may accept your view of the case, there is no love lost on her side, and very little on yours."

"You may add that I am going on the Continent next week, and don't intend to return until I can declare myself absolutely fancy-free. And now will you hear what I am come about this morning, and do me the justice of believing that I have persuaded Munden to offer you this appointment simply because of the interest that I have always felt in yourself?"

"Munden—Mr. Munden of 'Men and women' offer me an appointment?"

"You don't like him," said Ralston, colly. "Well, there are a good many there who share the feeling; and perhaps I m not wholly free from it myself. But such as he is, and such as the journal is, suits me, while I continue as largely in-

terested in it as I am just now, that he should be its editor-in-chief. You know something of him already, don't you? That letter of introduction I sent you, when I heard of your coming up to London to try your fortune, led to his engaging you as dramatic and musical critic on the paper."

"And in less than two months he dismissed me."

"Yes; your and his theories of music didn't harmonize, I can imagine," said Ralston, laughing. "He believes in Offenbach, and you in Beethoven. Well, you'll do better together, perhaps, as chief and sub——"

"Frankly, my lord, even if I had no scruples about accepting your kindness, I should dislike the idea of serving as subeditor under such a man as Munden."

"Frankly, my dear fellow, if you are so wonderfully scrupulous about the manner of start that you make in the literary world, it requires no very great penetration to predict that it will end in your never

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making one at all. What can it matter to you that Munden's manners are neither those of a Chesterfield, nor his mind that of a Dr. Johnson? I have given him to understand very plainly that you are a gentleman, and I have no doubt that he will take the hint and treat you as such."

"But again, Lord Ralston, my inex-Perience of the duties of a sub-editor-"

"It can be mended by practice, I sup-Pose. What the deuce! sub-editors are to be manufactured, are they not? They're not, like poets, 'to the manner born,' that I know of."

Clifford's silence evidently expressed his Continued unwillingness to accept the offer Poade to him.

"Mr. Clifford," said Lord Ralston suddenly, while his manner changed, and became at once more earnest and more haughty; "if you still doubt my word, I can only repeat to you that you are greatly wronging me, and withdraw. But if you will do me the justice to believe that I am innocent of any thought of wrong towards your sister; and that your grandfather's old pupil, though he may have got into sad scrapes in his time, is an honest fellow at bottom; why, I think, Harry," the speaker continued, his manner altering again, and becoming very cordial and winning, "that you will take my hand as another honest fellow should, and tell me that you see you have misjudged me and will accept the post I offer you."

He offered his hand as he spoke; and Clifford, after one brief look at him, grasped it, and pressed it warmly.

"I have indeed been very near misjudging you, Lord Ralston. My brother was right; you are an honourable English gentleman. Can you forgive me?"

Ralston only laughed, and returned the other's handshake. "And now, Clifford, what do you say to working under Munden? I don't say, 'Take the post, and keep it long;' but only, 'Take it, and make it serve as the stepping-stone to something better.' You are free to accept it, are you

not? you have left this school at Kensington?"

"Yes; ten days ago."

"And you'll take the berth under Munden? Well, then, meet me at the office at twelve to-morrow; and I'll introduce you to him, or, rather, re-introduce you. And now, let's have Miss Clifford in, and I'll say good-bye to her."

But Daisy, when she re-entered, her blue eyes languid and yet lustrous, and the faintest tinge of a blush lending perfection to her cheek; and was greeted by Ralston With, "Have you any commissions for me to execute in the crater of Vesuvius or on the top of Mont Blanc, Miss Clifford? I leave for Switzerland and Italy next week," Unexpectedly refused to hear of their guest Parting from them so suddenly.

"You were to deprive me of what you call the pleasure of my brother's company for only ten minutes, and you have kept him from me for at least an hour," she said, with a pout. "I think, Lord Ralston, the least you can do is to give us in return the

real pleasure of your own company for the rest of the evening."

A moment's irresolution glanced from Clifford's eyes; and then, turning to the young nobleman, he frankly seconded his sister's invitation. "If you have no other engagement, Lord Ralston; and as it is perhaps for the last time——"

"Yes; the last time—the very last," said Ralston, with peculiar emphasis. And accepting the invitation in the spirit in which it was given, he sat down at once and talked with Daisy over the topics of the day; while outside the sun sank lower and lower in the west, and twilight, stealing like a spirit over the earth, cast upon all things her veil of mystery, and turned even the most prosaic and barren facts of everyday life to romance.

"I can't offer you such tea as they will give you in Pekin, or coffee like that you will get at Constantinople," Daisy told her guest, when the landlady entered, bearing the tea-tray; "but, such as it is, you must let me offer you a cup of it, and drink 'bon

voyage' to you in another. So, bon voyage, milord, with all my heart," she added, gaily, while her eyes flashed at him, or so Ralston fancied, a saucy challenge over the tea-table; "and may you travel until you learn to confess that there's no place like——"

- "Like home. I am ready to confess it now, Miss Clifford."
- "Oh no, like Italy. I think if I had my choice, I would live all my life in Italy; and if I had an income like yours, Lord Ralston, I would take care to have my choice."
- "You dream of Italy as poets show it to you. Now I, to my sorrow, know what the country really is; and I assure you the reality is not half so agreeable as the dream."
- "Can any dream of Rome be better than the reality? Is it not the finest city in the world?"
- "In the time of Augustus Cæsar it was, no doubt; but unfortunately the Rome of to-day is what one has to live in, and that

of Augustus only exists in the shape of a few ruins that we look at."

- "And what fault have you to find with the Rome of to-day?"
- "Oh, only that it is worse at its best than London at its worst—in this very month of June, for instance."
- "I like London in June," said Daisy, very decidedly. "I could very well spend all the summer here."
- "Perhaps, then, you would not so much mind spending one in Rome?"
- "I should like it beyond all things. No, not beyond all things,—a summer in Rome would be good—one in Naples better—and one in Venice best of all."
- "Venice! A pretty summer residence!

  —Imagine a number of very filthy and slimy canals, with tumble-down houses on either side of them—very grand and gloomy, certainly; but the last places in the world that any one but rats and ghosts would care to live in; and you have in your mind's eye a photograph of Venice."
- "Byron does not say so. I prefer his description to yours, Lord Ralston."

- "You would not be a woman if you did not, Daisy," said her brother. "It is the nature of woman to prefer fiction to fact."
- "And Byron's fiction about Venice is a very pretty one, certainly," said Ralston. "He could throw a wonderful glamour over things that touched his imagination; and Venice did so, beyond a doubt."
- "Yes; he drew it so that one can see it," said Daisy, dreamily; "almost as in a picture of Turner's—the blue sky and the bluer water—and the marble palaces, and the bright sun shining down on them. I don't wonder that he liked to live there."
- "I could draw it as I have seen it, too," said Ralston; "the marble palaces damp and filthy; and the blue sky not visible; and the bluer water, as you call it, of a dirty grey. But I suppose you would say that these are only the tales of such a traveller as myself, and believe all the more firmly in Byron. What shall I send you from Venice, Miss Daisy?"
  - "I don't know-yes, I do, though-I

would like a dress such as the Venetian women wear; and some of that curious glass jewellery they manufacture in Venice. But you are not to send me anything, Lord Ralston, if you please."

She said this very coldly and decidedly; and Clifford noticed her tone with evident pleasure, and Ralston with a somewhat mortified look. But he turned off his vexation, if he felt any, with a laugh; and said only—

"A stone from the Bridge of Sighs, at least, Miss Clifford."

"No; for when Harry has become a great poet, and his writings sell as Byron's do now, he will take me to Italy, and we will see for ourselves if Venice is what you say it is."

Her eyes and those of Ralston turned at once to Clifford.

"Write prose, my dear fellow, if you want what you write to sell well," said the young peer, cynically; "and if you have been guilty of any poetry, take my advice and throw it in the fire. The age does not

want poetry; and what can a man do but go with his age?"

"He can be, like Carlyle, a truer man than his age."

"And be also, like Carlyle, I suppose, a man whom half the world misunderstands, and the other half laughs at. I don't profess to understand him myself, though I have dipped into him on occasions. Never be wiser than the world you write for is the golden motto for a writer—if you profess not to see that Mr. Midas Bull has ass's ears, Mr. Bull, you may depend upon it, will be a very good fellow with you, and reward you for your flattery with a handful or two of his gold."

"But I would tell him that he has ass's ears," said Daisy, wickedly; "only I would Profess to be quite in love with them, and rave about their delicacy and silkiness, and beg of him to let me stroke them—and I think my way would be the best."

Lord Ralston looked at her with a curious kind of respect in his glance. "When you are a year or two older, Miss Daisy," he you. I.

said, "you will be wiser in the ways of the world than I—a man, too—am at nearly thirty. It's strange that you—a country-bred girl—should have such a wicked wisdom."

Daisy acknowledged the ambiguous compliment by a flashing look. "You are a cynic, my lord," she said; "and it pleases you, I have noticed, to divide all of us poor women into two classes—the knavish and the foolish. I suppose you set me down as one of the former order."

"I set you down, at least, as what you have just called me—a cynic, and very prettily worldly-wise," said Ralston. "I don't know that you are not at heart rather more désillusioné than myself, for all your romance and Byronism, Miss Daisy."

"Oh, your lordship is surely sufficiently désillusioné," said Daisy, bitterly; "you have faith in neither man nor woman."

"Have you?" he asked.

"In my own sex—yes. We are better than you—we know what it is to love."

There was a strange wild thrill in her voice as she spoke; and looking at her as she sat there in the glow of the fading sunlight, with scorn curling her beautiful lips, and passion bright in cheek and eye,—and over all the glory of her amorous hair, that sunbeams kissed and sported in, and seemed to call on lovers' lips and hands to follow,—Ralston felt for one wild instant that the passion which ran like fever through his veins must needs master him, and in the next he would fling himself and his future at her feet.

He sat there strangely quiet, wrestling with the madness that was within him; and opposite him Daisy sat quiet, too, her chin leaned on her hand; and her brother, disturbed by her last wild words, watched her with uncertain eyes.

But soon the sun sank out of sight in the west; and as Night came on like a dream, Daisy rose dreamlike, too, and flitted noiselessly away. Clifford followed her; and returning presently, charged with her excuses and apologies, was stopped, ere he

had well begun to deliver them, by Ralston saying impatiently—

"I know—I know. But she will come back to wish me a last good-bye, will she not? You need not fear," the young peer added, hastily; "she does not care for me."

And Clifford looked at him, perplexed; for but five minutes before, Daisy, in answer to the question that he put to her, had protested firmly, "No, I do not care for him."

## CHAPTER XI.

## SUMMER DAYS.

WHEN, two years before, Lord Ralston had gone out, as his friend Dallas expressed it, "to knock over bears and buffaloes in the Far West and take sly peeps at pretty Mormons," he had deputed the young baronet to watch over his interests in "Men and Women," the celebrated "societyjournal" of which his lordship and two others were then proprietors. This publication was from the first distinguished for its brilliancy in epigram. Mr. Archer Munden, the editor, and part-proprietor at this time; and afterwards (when Lord Ralston and another grew tired of the undertaking and flung it up) editor and sole proprietor, was, however, in no way disposed to let an outsider interfere with him

in the exercise of his editorial functions. He gave Dallas to understand as much; and the other acquiesced with the lazy forbearance that characterized him. dear fellow," he said cynically to Munden, "I know tattle's the dish you've undertaken to set before the public, and that you're as good a hand at dishing it up as any editor can be. Serve up your remarks on things in general with what sauce you please-I won't say anything against the flavour." With which declaration the journalist could not but be content; and, careful of his principal's interest and his own, took advantage of Ralston's absence in America to impart to the criticisms of society and individuals in which the editor from the first indulged a delightfully-piquant raciness of tone. On his lordship's return, the journal lost something of that which to many who read it had probably been its most attractive feature; but Munden, though his lordship was thought to be out of humour with him, retained his post as editor-in-chief.

Under this man, who was not exactly such a chief as he would have chosen for himself. Clifford now worked as subeditor. He had nothing to complain of in the other's behaviour to him: Munden. though, as Ralston said, he could not render himself either a Chesterfield or a Dr. Johnson, knew how to trim his sails to suit the breeze of the moment; and was civil to his aide-de-camp. And yet Clifford was dissatisfied with his position and himselfwith his position because, as he savagely and exaggeratively expressed it, what he had to deal with was "scraps of society gossip served up with sauce piquante;" with himself because he had accepted that position from a man who, if not positively in love with his sister, at least confessed to a warmer feeling for her than one of mere friendship. Did Daisy return that feeling still more warmly? He had her denial and Ralston's that she did; but he watched her with a certain suspicion, and found her in the first weeks that passed after Ralston's departure for Switzerland by turns strangely

silent and capriciously gay. But whether pouting or smiling, she was always charm ing; and Dallas, seeing her sometimes in this bright June weather, owned her so.

Now that Ralston was away again, flitting from old haunt to old haunt of his upor the Continent, Dallas had quietly and un obtrusively resumed the position that he in connection with the journal held while its chief proprietor was in America He was often at the office of the paper; and having improved by degrees his acquaint ance with Harry Clifford, came at last to accompany the latter home one evening to his quiet lodging; and to discuss with Daisy, over the same modest refreshment that had been offered to Lord Ralston, the weeks he had spent in Wastdale. The girl received him, as her brother noticed, with an almost languid indifference; and when he went away, seemed to forget his visit in five minutes; only referring to it incidentally the day afterwards to make some careless observation on the difference between his manners and Ralston's.

But Dallas went away with warmer thoughts. He had Daisy's face brightly before him for the rest of that evening; and When the next day he rattled along the Strand in a hansom on his way to pay a Visit to the office of "Men and Women" he was thinking of her still. "Pretty!" he said to himself, with a vehemence of manner that contrasted strangely with his ordinary cold and careless bearing, "the Sirl's a houri! Great blue eyes, that you look into and see heaven at the bottom of 'em; red lips, a perfect complexion, and hair like a shower of sunbeams. Tt's margarita ante porcos, by Jove, when one thinks of the set she's thrown away upon. And then her figure—why, a man can't look at it for ten seconds without wishing that his arm was round that waist! By George, whatever that fool Shakespeare may say about there being nothing in a name, there's a glorious deal in hers. She's margarita every inch of her-a pearl without a flaw."

"Hallo, Sprott!" as the hansom stopped

and he sprang out, "is that you? So Ralston couldn't quite enter into your suggestion and Munden's about appointing you as Archer's sub."

"Appointing!" the person whom he addressed himself to answered dismally; "a pretty mess he has made of the appointment, hasn't he? Puts a fellow, who knows no more of sub-editing than I do of preaching sermons, into the berth over my head, and in spite of Archer's recommendation. I tell you, Sir Thomas, I've been confoundedly shabbily treated."

"Well, say so to Ralston, then," answered Dallas, carelessly. "It was he, you say, who thought you no more fit for sub-editing than for preaching sermons—not I."

"I'll say so to Munden, at least," the little man replied vindictively, "when I've got a little more evidence together as to what Clifford really is."

Dallas was passing on, when this speech arrested him. "Well, and what is he?" he asked, carelessly.

"A Radical—atheist—red-hot Republican

-I don't know what, but I'll find out. Spouts at Bradlaugh's meetings in Hyde Park. I saw him at one of them."

"The deuce you did! what took you there?"

"Why, Archer had asked me to report on the affair, and some of the ruffians mobbed me. I'll say this for Clifford, that he and a French fellow who was with him—some Red from across the water, I suppose came to my help, and got me off."

"And you mean to make him some cursedly shabby return, as far as I can understand you, for the kindness that he did you! It's the way of the world, no doubt. But I don't see why he shouldn't have been at Bradlaugh's meeting as a mere looker-on, as well as you."

"Well, perhaps he was. But I know this, at any rate, from what he has told me since, that his being at that meeting led to his having to leave the old pedagogue who was then employing him. Now, why should he have had to leave, I want to know?"

"Ah! why?" said Dallas, carelessly.

"And why the deuce should you want to know so much about another person's private affairs?"

"I mean to know why he left, at any rate, and to let Munden and his lordship know too. I'll look up the old schoolmaster's address in the Directory—Tickell's the name, I think—and get my wife to call on him. You won't repeat what I have told you to Clifford?" the little man asked, anxiously.

"Good morning, Mr. Sprott," said Dallas, walking off without vouchsafing any reply.

He entered the office, and found Clifford there; but, though the young men talked together for some time, he did not repeat to the latter what had passed between him and Sprott.

"You have an enemy, Clifford," he said at parting, however; "and one who would not at all object to stab you in the dark. Good morning. I'll leave you to find out who."

Some weeks had passed before Clifford, being again in the company of the author of this speech, recalled it, and asked for an explanation. The July days—that ominous July of 1870—were bright and splendid; and meeting, one sultry evening, with the young journalist and his sister, as they sauntered in Kensington Gardens, Dallas walked with them to and fro under the delicious shadow of the trees; and the three enjoyed the beauty of those unmatched gardens, that delicious woodland in the heart of London, as they were in the years before decay had wholly come upon them, and when the axe of the woodman and the gaunt grim blackness of dead and dying trees were yet far off. For as we have known Kensington Gardens our sons shall never know them—nay, we ourselves can hardly recognize now in the thinned ranks of trees, and the cracked dry earth where once the grass was, that oasis of bright, fresh verdure—of dark, soft turf, and waving boughs that stretched above or bowed towards it, which we knew in the desert heart of London, and loved so well. But yet Memory has her seasons of wakefulness; and sometimes through her kindly aid we see Kensington Gardens as they were in the time gone by; and our youth and their freshness and greenness rush glad on us once more. Again with shut eyes we lie beneath the great trees through which the rays of the sun laugh softly; and as hopes of the future shine upon us, and sweet glad promises crowd smiling on our soul, London and its oppression fade away, and the summer stillness about us is as that of Eden, and our life and the world around become a dream.

"Are you fond of the water, Clifford?" Dallas asked abruptly, as the three walked up and down, and Daisy's bright, glad face laughed out from under the dainty sunshade that she carried, and her dreamy eyes shone star-like.

"No one more so. My sister and I go often down to Kew or Richmond on the days when I am not wanted at the office; and I——"

"And I," said Daisy, interrupting, "persuade him to take me out in a boat, and

to row me up and down the river between Twickenham and Richmond. I don't think there's a lovelier spot in England, nor a pleasanter way of seeing it than from the Thames."

"Will you and Miss Clifford do me the honour of making use of a small steam-launch I have lying at Richmond whenever you feel inclined. Darley, the boat-builder, has charge of it, and he'll send a man with you to take the management. I'll give him orders to that effect, if you'll allow me."

"Many thanks; but neither my sister nor myself could think of taking advantage of your kindness."

"But why not? It costs me nothing beyond the trouble of writing to Darley; and I should be delighted to think that, instead of the boat lying idle, it had been the means of giving Miss Clifford and you pleasure."

"Would it give you pleasure, Daisy?" Clifford asked his sister.

"Yes-no," the girl said, slowly. "I

don't know, Harry. I think, on the whole, I should prefer a row-boat; and I have heard you say that you detest steam-launches."

- "Every oarsman must," said Clifford, rather embarrassed by the speech.
- "And why, please?" asked Dallas. "A steam-launch, cleverly built and managed—and I assure you mine's a gem—is neither a nuisance nor an eyesore. Let me tempt you into trying mine for once. Come, Miss Clifford, persuade your brother to name a day when you and he may make acquaint-ance with some of the upper reaches of the Thames."
- "Will you come with us?" the girl asked suddenly.
- "Will you do me the honour of asking me?" Dallas answered, with some eagerness.

Daisy gave him a glance—mischievous, strange, unfathomable—that her brother did not see. "I think I should like to go," she said at last. "Yes; just for once I should like the trip. Say yes, Harry;

we will go; and that you would like Sir Thomas to join us."

And as Clifford never refused anything to his only sister, in reason or out of reason, the excursion was presently agreed upon, not much to his satisfaction, and a day named for meeting Dallas at Richmond.

"The nineteenth, then," said their inviter, shaking hands. "Au revoir. I hope the day will be fine. Coax one to suit us out of the clerk of the weather, Miss Clifford, if you come across him between now and then."

"Oh I'll coax one from him," said Daisy, gaily; "just such a day as this."

So, on the nineteenth—unconscious that it was a day of European interest, and one to be remembered through centuries—Dallas met his guests at Richmond; and the young baronet's graceful little launch, the Fairy, unthreaded deftly for the party all that afternoon the windings of the Thames. It was almost evening when she was at last put about, and came racing

swiftly back towards her starting-point; and when a sunset flaming as the rage of war was to be that burst forth that day on Europe was dying out of the western sky, she was still several miles away from Richmond; and while the water eddied and rippled about her bows a louder ripple of song and laughter was breaking from the deck above.

For Daisy was in high spirits—in wild spirits her brother had almost called it; and no longer silent and languid, but talkative and brilliant, had apparently been seized with a strange caprice for fascinating Dallas. It was passing—it could not but be passing, Clifford told himself—the mere wild, wilful whim of the moment; but he watched the pair all day with a growing discontent.

The sunset was fast dying out of the sky; and Daisy, her laughing face lit up by the warm, rich glow, was leaning a little forward where she sat; and with Dallas's eyes seeking hers from where he rested, half-reclining against the side, and the deeper notes of his voice assisting hers.

was singing charmingly the "Canadian Boat Song." A little apart and behind her, Clifford, with a look at once anxious and absent, watched the pair.

Daisy, turning suddenly, saw how he looked at her, and laughed out lightly. "How like you are to Mephistopheles just now, Harry! Does he not remind you of Mephistopheles watching Faust and Marguerite, Sir Thomas?"

"I don't think Mephistopheles had quite the same expression of countenance," was Dallas's answer.

- "Oh, Harry can look quite as black as any fiend. There!—watch him!—what a scowl he gave me when I said it. Are you ill, Harry, or only out of temper?"
- "I was thinking," Clifford answered, shortly.
- "Thinking!—thinking what? Of some **Poem** you are writing?"
- "Of the impossibility of a man ever understanding a woman. Until of late, Daisy, I thought I knew you quite well; but now you are showing me every day

something very different from the little sister I left in Wastdale."

- "And yet I am just as much your little sister as ever; and you must be very stupid not to see it. What is there that you find so changed in me?"
- "You are grown a woman—a woman of the world, too; and when I left you, you were a shy little girl."
- "A woman of the world," repeated Daisy, lightly. "Does that mean that I am learning to see how very false and wicked a world it is? If it does, then I am certainly a woman of the world."
- "And where should you get this knowledge, Daisy?"
- "Where?—ah, where indeed! Tell me where you think I should have got it, Sir Thomas."
- "Out of novels, I suppose," said Dallas, carelessly. "They have got into the knack—the writers, I mean—of making their heroes and heroines more possible creatures than they used to be. There's Munden's novels, for example—the hero's always the

ort of fellow that you feel, if you met in sciety, you'd keep at a distance."

"And his heroines—how does he draw is heroines?"

"Oh! his heroines! Draws them stagily, nd, as a rule, they're the sort of creatures hat you never meet."

"Will you ever write a novel, do you link, Harry? If you ever do, fall in love efore you begin it, and then you will nderstand women a little better than you o now," said his sister, gaily.

"Not he," said Dallas, cynically. "There ever yet lived the man—Solomon not accepted—who understood a woman. The nly thing perfectly certain about them is lat in general the greatest affection they be capable of feeling is for themselves."

Daisy laughed on hearing him. "We by just like you men," she averred; "we we both virtues and vices naturally; but u persist in treating us as if we must ther be angels or demons, and the end of generally is that we become the latter. don't think I'm an angel myself."

"Not the other thing, I hope?" asked Dallas, laughing.

"I don't know; not as yet, perhaps. What the future may change me to, I can't prophesy. Oh, how I wish I had a future, by the way."

"No woman has," said Dallas; "she must be content to take the present as she finds it, and to live in it, as she may be sure her mother and grandmother did before her."

"Yes; the selfish mind of a man spoke there," said Daisy. "You think the world was made for you, and women, among other things, was given you to be your slave. And, oh! how some of us laugh at you, and how we wind you round our fingers!"

"And, oh! how some of us men enjoy the process," said Dallas, gaily. "Don't you remember the old lines, Miss Daisy?

'The pleasure surely is as great, In being cheated, as to cheat.'

The writer was thinking of being cheated by a woman."

- "I'll act!" cried Daisy, as if taking a sudden determination. "I'll go on the stage, and take all the parts in which men are fooled by a woman—such parts as Lady Teazle, for instance. How I wish I were like her!—married to an old, rich husband."
- "You do!" said Dallas. "How would you treat him?"
- "I'd smile on him to his face, and laugh at him behind his back. I'd coax him into saying that he liked to see me always prettily dressed, and then run him in debt terribly; and when the bills came in I'd present them to him with a pretty smile, and ask him to pay them."
  - "And if he refused, and were sulky?"
- "I'd sulk, too, and pout until he would be only too glad to give in; and then when he had paid the bills, run up more."
- "Well, God defend the man who wins you from being old and rich. Excuse the remark, Miss Clifford; but I think he would be as badly off as poor Sprott, and Sprott's as cruelly henpecked as any unhappy Benedict I know," said Dallas, laughing.

- "And who is 'poor Sprott'?" asked 216 Daisy. "A writer, do you say? Oh, the romantic name! Of course, he must be a poet, with such a name."
  - "Has not your brother told you of him? Sprott writes for 'Men and Women.'"
  - "Oh, of course, I remember now. dreadfully vulgar little man, is he not? with a pert, conceited way of talking? I met him once, when I was out walking
    - "If he heard your description of him! with Harry." He hates your brother already; and he would have your name down beside his in his list of People I would like to be revenged upon.' I've an idea that Ralston and myself both figure in it."
      - "And why does he hate Harry?"
      - "Because I took the sub-editorship of 'Men and Women' over his head," said Clifford, suddenly interposing in the conversation. "Is not that it, Sir Thomas?"
        - "I believe it is, my dear fellow. Munder wanted to have him, I know, in Milford's place, but Ralston wouldn't hear of it

Said both his writings and himself have too strong a flavour of the cad about them."

"It was Sprott, then, I suppose, against whom you warned me one day at the office? You spoke of some one who would not mind dealing me a stab in the back."

"And Sprott's the man," said Dallas. "Yes, he would do you an ill turn, if he could."

"What ill turn can he possibly do to me?"

"Invent some lying story probably, and retail it to your disadvantage. I'm not sure, indeed, that he has not already been inquiring into your antecedents with a view to getting up something. But here we are at Richmond and the close of a glorious day. And now for a quick drive to the station, Miss Daisy, and catching the last train back to town."

"A glorious day" Dallas had called it, in Peaking of it; and by his look and tone he meant what he said. "A divine day," Daisy, too, declared it to have been; and her eyes shone bright on Dallas at parting,

and her hand lay soft in his as she spoke of the pleasure it had given her. Clifford only said nothing of pleasure; and as he gave cold and brief thanks to their entertainer, was inwardly resolving that his sister and Dallas should not meet again.

"Daisy," he said to her, when they had taken leave of the young baronet and were whirling back towards London, "I am glad that you go back next week to Wastdale."

And Daisy, strangely enough, did not press for an explanation of this speech.

The cab they took at Waterloo was entangled presently in a press of vehicles near one of the theatres; and as Clifford looked out to learn the cause of their stopping, his eye fell suddenly upon something on the pavement that made him call to the driver, and spring out instantly.

The object that had caught his attention was only the torn contents-bill of a newspaper, lying trampled and muddy where some seller of evening papers had left it; and with a stone or two holding it down. He stooped over the torn fragments, and

read now plainly on them "WAR DECLARED," and a little lower the word "France."

War! A sense as if of a blow struck dizzily through him, and he turned away, murmuring to himself the one word, "Roland!"

## CHAPTER XII.

## DREAMLAND.

Daisy Clifford had, as her brother said, many charming qualities; but among them was not to be reckoned a delicacy of disposition as exquisite as her delicacy of loveliness. She had for some time felt a certain curiosity about the journal that Clifford did not conceal from her he kept; and coming on it one morning in his absence, opened it, and began to read.

The day was that following the one on which France had flung down the gauntlet to Prussia, and the word "War" had struck like an electric shock through Europe. Clifford, excited by the abrupt forthcoming of the tremendous event which his friend nearly three months before had

prophesied to him, had given vent to his feelings in language that was at once a retrospect of the past and horoscope of the future. And so Margaret, bending her pretty face over the pages of her brother's book, read there, expressed in burning words, his thoughts on the mighty crisis that had arisen.

"When in 1789," wrote the young man, enthusiastically, "the Bastille walls fell to the summons of an awakening people, as those of Jericho before the trumpets of the Israelites, a light as if of liberty shone suddenly from out the midst of France, and turned to her the eyes of the nations around yet groaning under the burden of kinghood, and prostrate beneath the weight of thrones. The light waxed broader and brighter; it seemed as if its splendour would fill the world: and amidst that intensest radiance men saw as it were the figure of a goddess walking, and holding forth to all the nations a cup that sparkled as with living water. Then, while parched lips were seeking eagerly to drink, and

fettered hands were striving to throw off their chains, the white daybreak changed at once to crimson, and the water in the cup was turned to blood; and, for the glorious face of Liberty, there were seen in France the phantoms Anarchy and Terror. . . . The kings that, with such a gaze as the Neapolitan peasant turns upon Vesuvius when the lava is flowing through his fellow's vineyard to his own, watched from afar off this new volcano and the hell-fire bubbling in its crater, Paris, beheld by that terrible light two heads—the severed heads of a king and queen-drop bleeding into the basket of the guillotine. The unhappier Republican saw his mother, Freedom, butchered by the hands of those who named themselves her children, and bloodstained Murder worshipped in stead; and France, a Mænad drunken with the wine of blood, rushing furiously upon her sister-nations, bearer, not of the olivebranch, but of the naked sword. Not Phosphor, but that Wormwood Star, the light of which fills earth with bitterness.

was it that had risen in the firmament; its rays were not the promise of a dayspring of universal liberty, but of night, a night lurid and terrible, when Europe was shaken with the tread of armies, and there trampled upon her prostrate kings a figure as of incarnate War, diademed with an imperial crown, and named of men Napoleon.

"This July twilight, while the last faint redness of the sunset dies like a blush out of the western sky, and from the high blue of the zenith stars look down on me like angels' eyes, the name Napoleon is once more on the tongue of Europe; and I, grandson of a man born the year and month the Bastille fell, sit in my darkening room, and watch, as eighty-one years ago a journalist of the name of Camille Desmoulins may have watched, for the birththroes of a French Republic. Will she come as in the days when Camille wrote 'Les dieux ont soif'—at first glorious as Venus rising from the sea, a vision beholding which all hearts grew sick with love; then terrible as Medea, her foul hands red

from the murder of her children, her heart as the nether millstone, and her eves bright with fire from hell? Will Earth a second time take of her gold and clay and fuse them with her fire into a Mirabeau: or fashion of her slime a Marat to be the idol of the mob? Will a Danton and a Robespierre—eagle and serpent—writhe again for a while in mortal conflict, and receive at last of the earth of that Republic for the chief-citizenship of which they had battled, just sufficient for two bloodstained graves? Will the brotherhood of men a second time be that of Cain?—the reaper, Death, thrust his sickle, the guillotine, once more into the harvest-field of France? Must a voice of lamentation again resound the length and breadth of Europe?—Freedom mourning over her dishonour and refusing to be comforted; and some strong soldier a second time receive commission from Heaven to arise, and having seized upon that old serpent, the dragon, Anarchy, to chain him down, and be a monarch in his stead? When, in some tremendous defeat a few weeks or months removed from the hosts that are gathering to-night under the Napoleonic eagles, the future that Louis looks for becomes the Present, and in the crash of the French military system the Empire is beaten down, will there be set up in France a Republic or a lie?

"I look to the stars. The times are gone by when they were the books of men; and I read there neither threat nor promise. Night, with whose spirit mine has so often communed, whispers me no oracle. I ask of my own heart a token of the future; and it answers me with a name that, if I were to go to-morrow into the streets of Paris and speak it in the ears of the men who are crying 'A Berlin!' would pass as unheeded as though it were my own. When the stars are next year shining from a July heaven, earth, it may be, will have learned to listen for the name of Louis Roland."

Daisy put down the volume, and laughed softly to herself. Then, taking it up again, she read:—

"I ask of the future two gifts,—that the

French Republic, when it springs from the ashes of the Empire, shall hail Roland as her consul; that the hero thus preferred may seek my sister as his wife. What if my own name, more truly than the unforgotten one of Keats, be 'writ in water,' so that centuries hence poets happier than I shall still remember those of my sister and my friend?"

A great shadow came over Daisy's beauty as she stood there, bright in the bright sunlight; and the light seemed to fade from her eye and the colour from her cheek, and even the golden sparkle of her hair to have something in it dull and cold. With a strange, half-sobbing little cry, she let the volume drop; and catching both hands to her bosom, turned away.

When, in the evening, Clifford came home, she waited until tea was over; and then took the book, and laid it before him. "I have read it," she said coldly, as she pointed to the open page.

"You take strange liberties with my private papers," he said, half-angrily, half-

amused. "Of course, though, I ought not to have left the book about. I might have known that all women take after Mother Eve in the matter of curiosity. What have you read, Daisy?" He looked carelessly to see; and then sprang up with a start. "Since you have possessed yourself of my secret—not very honourably, I must say—I may as well be frank with you. It's my dearest desire in life to see you the wife of Louis Roland. Of course, though, now you know that he's my hero, you'll make up your mind that he shall never be yours."

"May he not be already another girl's hero?" said Daisy, coldly. "Before you assigned me to him, would it not have been as well, perhaps, to ask that? Or, possibly you did inquire, and gave him your reasons for asking."

"Daisy, you don't understand me. I could not speak to Louis of my wish; I should never have spoken of it to you, if you had not surprised my secret. But surely, my dear little sister, there's nothing very wrong on my part in wishing to see

you the wife of the truest friend I have, and the best and noblest fellow I know."

- "If he is good," said Daisy, in a hard, dry voice, "I should never suit him. I am not good; I never shall be."
  - "What makes you say so, Daisy?"
- "Oh, nothing—nothing!" The girl paused for a moment; and then added, fretfully, "I am sick to death of London, Harry. I shall be very glad when I go back to Wastdale."
- "You tire of everything, I think," said Clifford, bitterly. "Was it yesterday or the day before that you were delighted with London?"
- "I soon tire of sermons, at least," said Daisy, very crossly. "Shall I tell you, Harry, why I tire of things?"
- "Yes; do, if you can. I would be glad to hear."
- "Because I am just as ambitious for a girl as you are for a boy. I don't say man and woman, but girl and boy; because I am not a woman yet, and you—with your poetry and your dreams—are only a boy."

Clifford rested his chin on his hand, and looked steadily at his sister. "What are you ambitious of, Daisy?" he asked quietly.

- "Of having everything my own way. I want to lead an easy life of it, and do precisely what I please—live how I please—love whom I please—and die when I please. Oh, if one could only go on for a long time being beautiful and young; and at last, when one had enjoyed life thoroughly, die just as one was beginning to get tired of it! It would be almost like going quietly to sleep, after a long day's pleasure."
- "You don't love Ralston, you say. Could you marry him for his money and his position, do you think, if he were to ask you?"
- "I don't know—if I felt as I do just now, I might. Oh, Harry, I feel very wicked at this moment! What a shame it is that you and I should be so poor!"
- "God knows I feel no ambition to be rich, Daisy. If I can get back full health of body and mind, and make enough by my pen to keep myself for the present, and you

and me when our grandfather dies, I shall not ask much more from Fortune."

"But you will ask a little," said Daisy, penetratingly. "Some day or other, you will meet a girl whom you will fall in love with, and want to marry."

"Perhaps. I have not met any one as yet, however, whom I would care to ask to be my wife."

"And our cousin, Louis, whom you would like to ask me to be his, has he met any one, do you know?"

"Louis has not many secrets from me. I don't think he has a love-secret among them."

"Is he ambitious? Will he try hard to distinguish himself in this terrible war that has broken out?"

"I doubt if there is a more ambitious man in France. But, luckily for him, his patriotism is still greater than his ambition, and he will always think of his country before himself."

"So, then," said Daisy, disregarding the qualifying part of the answer, "he, you,

and I are all of us ambitious in our way—only the ways are different. I think you are the worst, Harry—you not only want to be a great man yourself, but to marry your sister to a Marshal of France."

- "Not to a Marshal of France, Daisy. I hope better things of Louis."
- "Well, whatever you hope of him, I say this, that you and he are both more ambitious than I. I don't want to be greater in any way than I am, but only a little happier and richer."
- "Would you be happy, if you were rich, Daisy?"
- "Would you be happy, if you were a great poet, Harry?"
- "I don't know—perhaps not. But I never shall be a poet; only a writer of indifferent prose."
- "Dear old Wastdale!" Daisy said, with a sigh. "Some day, when grandfather is dead, and you and I have gone on our different ways out into the world, we shall repent that we ever left it."

Clifford started. "How much have you

read of this?" he asked, laying his hand on the journal beside him. "Have you read my parable about Wastdale?"

"No, nothing but what I showed you. Read it to me, Harry."

"I don't think that you would understand it. I don't know that I quite understand it myself, or why I wrote it—except that I was in a mood at the time to regret very bitterly that I ever came to London."

"And you described yourself and your feelings, do you say, in this parable?"

"You shall tell me if I did." And Clifford turned over a few pages, and began to read:—

"Mr. Thomas Gray, that elegant voluptuary, whose conception of Paradise embodied itself in a sofa and a novel by Crebillon, has sung to us with no little sweetness and pathos of certain rustic Berkshire careers that jolted and rumbled along the way of life as heavily and uneventfully as one of the village waggons along the London high-road. Of its kind,

the sleepy monotone of the chant is perfect; the drowsy village and the sleeping churchyard seem to lie like dreams about us, and the peace of Morpheus folds us as we listen. It was pity, though, that the elegist should have disturbed the bee-like murmur of his stanzas by the intrusion of that mendacious and altogether misplaced hypothesis concerning the dust-choked lips of nameless and tuneless Miltons, the idly-withered lives of Cromwells, guiltless of having rendered obedience to their Maker's command to go forth and shape the destinies of the world. Genius, the undeveloped genius of some never-to-be-crowned king of men, claved-up in a Berkshire churchvard! It was Wastdale Head that Gray was thinking of. He was coaxed once in the course of his epicure life away from Cambridge sofas to the Westmoreland lakes; he saw Grasmere before the blight of the tourist fell upon it: is it too much to hazard the theory that he had seen or heard of Wastdale? 'Far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife.' Yes; far, very far; the mighty barrier of

the hills lifted on every side, and staying with the eternal command, 'No further!' the torrent of life that roars so wildly through great cities; the mountain-tops offering to the few dwellers in the serenity of this wilderness altars which, at early morning, the sun lights up for worship; whatever is strong and noble in man waxing in stature by reason of the strength and the nobleness of Nature: whatever is mean and weak shrinking and dwindling as if re-It was in the shadow of Scawfell proved. that Gray met the men whose 'sober wishes never learned to stray; 'the rude God's Acre of the dalesmen was the one burial-ground in all England of which he might with any hope of truthfulness have dared to sing—

<sup>&#</sup>x27;Some mute, inglorious Milton here may rest, Some Cromwell.'

<sup>&</sup>quot;Berkshire has not, in all her acred dulness, a nook that could have prevailed on spirits so mounting to tie themselves down for life to mental effacement and the breaking of clods. Dim noises from the battle-

fields of life would have reached them, and roused their pulses; the guide-post on the highway to London would have been the finger of Ambition, beckoning, Come! Only in Wastdale could the Saul whom God had made to tower head and shoulders above all others of the people remain hidden from the sight of his fellow-men, and ignorant the while of the stature of his intellect, because the millions against whom he might have measured himself were far off, and he walked alone. A poet, it may be, fame has lost in him, this unknown great man whom Gray fancied to have been laid in Stoke Pogis churchyard; and whose dust is really mingled with the earth of Wastdale. the spring-time of his years and of the world about him—the time when all things that he heard or looked upon, whether the songs of birds, or the joyful voices of the winds, or the brightness of flowers and grass, or the dance and sparkle of the waters of the lake, took shapes as of hope, and seemed prophesying sweet things of the future then the harp-strings of his being vibrated

often to a subtle touch; and he would fain have spoken, but that he was unversed in the lore of his fellow-men, and knew no wisdom but that of Nature. Then shone summer; and the hot sun glowed down on a head wherein marvellous thoughts slept fierily; and the earth that the life of the mute singer was consumed in tilling put forth her crops; and all things spoke of labour, and of its harvest. For one July moment, when the winds were laid asleep and the throats of the birds had been parched into silence, and even the calling to each other of the Scawfell waterfalls was but a whisper, the note of fame's trumpet reached from the world without to the heart of the mountains and of the poet. lifted his eyes from the one volume he had power to read in, the wonder-book of Nature; and said to himself, 'I will go out from these mountains; and be a partaker in the life of cities; and share in the toils and the knowledge of my fellow-men.'

"At daybreak, therefore,—and daybreak of a most lovely morning; for he wished that his last look of Scawfell and Wastwater should be taken when the beauty of each was at its tenderest,—he climbed the pass between Great Gavel and Kirkfell: and thought that night to sleep at Keswick. He turned when the highest of the ascent was reached; and looked back with the vearning that only the self-exiled feel, at the shelter he had loved, and was leaving. The morning sunbeams sparkled on the lake and the dew-wet grass; clouds were gone from Scawfell, and mists from Wastwater: and the still glory of the whole bright prospect was such that the love of him who looked upon it became prayerful; and he said, 'Here, surely, if upon no other spot of earth, must tread sometimes the foot of the angel, Peace.' And then his heart accused him, and he thought, 'Shall I find her in cities?' He looked above him, and saw the sun regarding him like the eye of God: and remembering to have heard how in a great city that eye was all but hidden, he turned in sudden trembling, and fled homeward. And of his life henceforth, Wastdale preserves but the tradition that it was healthful, and active, and happy; and that when, at fourscore years, death came upon him as a sleep, his last look was to the mountains he had loved, and his farewell whisper 'Peace.'"

"Well," asked Clifford, as he laid down his journal, "was it of myself that I wrote all this?"

Daisy started from the dreamy attitude she had fallen into while listening, and turned on him a curious, meaning smile, and an eye bright with mischievous things.

"You are not a poet, you say," she answered; "and you have left Wastdale."

"And what if I go back?"

"Oh, yes, come back!" She laughed out strangely as she said it; and Clifford looked at her, puzzled by the expression of her face. "Come back when your dreams come true, Harry; and then, if the great writer likes to bring with him his cousin the great general, and the great general is inclined to court me, I'll promise that I'll become his wife."

## CHAPTER XIII.

JULY, 1870.

Ten days had passed since the declaration of war between France and Prussia—days that had been wasted at Paris and improved at Berlin. Ten days had passed; and in London, Harry Clifford, once more alone, was looking forward to the brief holiday that should enable him, at the end of August, to rejoin his sister and grandfather in Wastdale; and in Paris, Louis Roland, his spirit on fire with baffled ardour, cursed the fate that separated him from his comrades who were moving towards the Rhine. The first moves in the terrible game were making; and he, an inactive spectator, lingered far away from the chess-board, and had no

portion in that strife whose prize was to be the supremacy of Europe.

How jubilant was Paris in those days! How the bright sun flamed down on her: and found the fierce city athirst with the lust of conquest, and glad as a tiger about to claim its prev! For the mode in which the French nation rushed into this war of disaster and humiliation was very tigerlike: and the national dream was-one leap, and the Rhine would be crossed and the legions that guarded it struck down :-another, and the French flag should wave in conquered Berlin. But, darkly, sternly, strongly, while all between Calais and Strasbourg was purposeless hurry and mad confusion, there gathered on German soil those resistless hosts before whom the troops of Bazaine and Macmahon were to melt away as a sand-wall before the incoming tide of the sea; and the Teuton leaders prepared, in grim knowledge of the strength they wielded, for that campaign whose goal was Paris.

Three days after the declaration of war,

Roland had petitioned to be sent on active Yesterday, the refusal of that service. petition had reached him; and the illimitable horizon of hope that the nineteenth of July had opened before him, narrowed itself suddenly to the gloomy certainty that, as an officer of engineers, he must be content to remain during at least the earlier weeks of the campaign inactive in Paris, and work with what little heart he might at the technical part of his profession, while daily -hourly almost—there was flashed news of defeat or victory from the Rhine. swore that it should not be. If he could not lead men to the charge, he could at least be led; if his captaincy in the engineers stood in the way of his hurling himself with the bravest of France upon the legions of Prussia, he would lay down that commission, and carry a chassepot in For Roland, cold in many the ranks. things, was hot in this-the ardour of love he bore his country; and, hesitating often, never faltered in his belief that he, too, was of the mould in which the men who VOL. I. 16

understand war and prevail in it are cast. He sat down, therefore, and wrote a letter resigning his commission; to be forwarded to the Minister of War if, after every effort that it was in his power to make, permission to proceed to the front was still denied him. "Let it go," he thought, as his eye fell on his epaulet; "the Republic must come; and then—soldier or officer—will come my time."

In the absorbing and eager anxiety that possessed him to let the throw of battle decide whether a grave or a glorious future were reserved for him, and filled with a thousand hopes and fears for France and for himself, he forgot everything—forgot even that he was the only son of his mother, and she a widow. The same evening that active service was refused him, he sat down and wrote to her of that refusal; and expressed his determination, if better might not be, to throw up his commission, and fight as a private soldier.

The letter came to Alison Roland, and struck her down as if it had been a blow.

i

Already, at that trumpet-note of war which had thrilled so suddenly through Europe, the heart of the gentle lady had shuddered with a cruel pain and terror; and now to find him—her son—her darling—eager for the very peril that she prayed God with a mother's tears to guard him from, and resolute on not being held back from the day of battle, was to see, as it were, opening between him and her the darkness of the grave.

She lay that night sleepless; and in the morning called Isabel to her, and said in a trembling voice, "My child, I am going to Paris. It may be the last time I shall ever see my poor Louis."

"Take me with you," the girl pleaded.
"I know I cannot comfort you, dearest, at such a time as this; but if you will let me come with you to take care of you——"

"Oh yes," the mother answered; "you must come, too. We will beg him not to do this mad thing he talks of—not to throw away his life. Quick, child!—how soon can you be ready?

And so, that night Château Roland was left to the care of two old servants; and by the afternoon of the following day the travellers were in Paris. Roland, when he saw them, started back as from two ghosts. "Mother!" he cried; and then—breaking off in the impetuous question of "What brings you here?" that should have followed—"My darling, how ill you look!"

He was at her side in an instant; he tried to comfort her, to soothe her. The news that had so stirred his heart with chafing hopes and wild unrest had almost broken hers, he saw. Ah, how many breaking hearts of mothers there were in France just then!

"Louis," she said, when, to all her passionate entreaties that he would not fling away his life, he answered only by pleading his duty to France, "Louis, you are killing me!"

The wild cry reached his heart at last; he paled, and wavered. "Mother," he said slowly; and then, bending over her and kissing her, "As you will have it, darling—I will be a traitor since you bid me."

"Not a traitor, Louis!" But the fierce words stirred a pang in her; she, in whose heart the first emotion was love of her son, began to understand that in his the first love he bore would be always for his country. Yet she could not at once bring herself to sacrifice both him and her on that bloodstained altar of patriotism at which he worshipped; she could only ask, imploringly, "Will it cost you so much, Louis, to do this for your mother's sake?"

"Very much."

She sat silent for a while; and then rose and kissed him. "Go, my boy," she said, calmly; "since you think your country calls you, your mother will not try to hold you back. Do what you think your duty. Is that as you would have me speak to you, Louis?"

"You speak like a Roman matron," he answered, returning her embrace. "Mother, in the days that I foresee are coming on us the women of France must be like those

of Sparta—they must send their sons forth against the invader, and bid them return with honour, or never. Mother, many days will not have passed before there will come news from the Rhine of a terrible defeat."

"Ah! I am not fit to be a soldier's mother, Louis—I am only a fond, weak woman who will pray God to give you safely back to her. But go, my boy; and may——" Her voice trembled; the tears that would not be restrained rushed forth. "Oh, my boy, my dearest, may Heaven grant that you come safely back to me!"

"Your prayers will be my shield," he answered, trying to speak in an assured voice. "Mother, forgive me!—it breaks my heart to see you suffer so—but, believe me, in doing this thing I am doing my duty to France."

She made a great effort, and gathered back her tears. "I am worn out, my dear—the long journey here and my anxiety for you have been too much for me; but I will be stronger when I have rested for a while.

No, Isabel," for the girl was preparing to accompany her, "I must be alone, my child."

She left the room; and even as the door closed behind her, and while still her last sad, fond look was with him, on the air without there clanged loud sounds of military music; and then came the tramp of feet and the cheering of the crowd, and wild cries, "The Rhine! the Rhine!" He sprang to the window, his cousin following him; and gazed with hungry eyes on the long line of troops that passed.

"Oh!" he muttered, half careless, half unconscious of a listener, "what better fate can a man ask than to die for his country, unless to live to save her? And it may be weeks—it must be days—before I join them!"

"Louis," said the low voice of the girl beside him, "who is the right with in this war?"

He started, and turned suddenly. "The right!—the right! There is no question of right between us—it is one of might—of

whether they or we shall be the sovereign power in Europe. And when they invade us, and every day brings news of a fresh defeat, that lessens by so many thousands of our best troops the distance between them and Paris, will that be a time to talk of right?—of anything but dying for France or saving her?"

"Yet there must be a right somewhere, if one could only find it," she answered; "and to my mind it is not with France."

"Yes," he answered impatiently, "you are like your idol Carlyle—you believe that the nearest approach man can make to being perfect is to be German. Well, I, who know something of these Germans, tell you that if they can be heroes they are also, at bottom, brutal. They are in the right, do you say?—wait but till the war is a little older, and see how hopelessly they will put themselves in the wrong."

"And can you not wait, too, till the war is a little older, Louis, before breaking your mother's heart?"

<sup>&</sup>quot;Cousin!"

- "Oh, quarrel with me if you wish; but I tell you that your thought should be of her before everything; and that what you call your duty to France is not to be compared with the duty you owe to her."
- "I cannot see things with the same eyes as you, who are a woman and an alien," he answered. "What I call my duty to France is the first of earthly objects to me."
- "And you will sacrifice your mother to it? She will die, if she hears of your death."
- "She shall say to me 'Stay,' and I will stay; or 'Go,' and I will go—But she will not say to me 'Stay,' for she knows that if I stayed I should loathe myself for a traitor and a coward. You don't understand me, cousin, but my mother does."
- "Tell me this one thing, Louis, and I will try to understand it. Why should you throw up your commission, and fight as a private soldier?"
- "Because, except I fight as a private soldier, it seems that no chance will be given me of fighting."

- "You have not resigned yet?"
- "But for my colonel, I should have done so. He has interested himself in my case; and yesterday, when the refusal of my petition reached me, he exacted a pledge from me that I would not stir in the matter for another week."
- "There is always a week, then. Since you could wait a week for your colonel, will you not promise, if there is no news at the end of it, that you will wait another for your mother's sake?"
- "Bella, I dare promise nothing. I can hardly promise, if there should come news within the next few days of some great blow struck on the frontier, that I will keep the promise I have already passed."

His cousin looked at him, and shook her head. "I don't understand you, Louis—you were right to tell me that," she said, sadly.

"Shall I also tell you why?" he asked her. "You are out of all sympathy with me, Bella; and what a woman does not sympathize with she never understands." "Yet I could feel a great sympathy, I think, with the devotion you have for France, if it were not for my feeling of the duty you owe your mother."

"I tell you that you know nothing of the devotion you speak of—nothing of France, and nothing of me. She is not your country—nor I——" He stopped abruptly; looked at her for a moment; and then broke out, passionately, "Cousin, if a year ago you could have found it in your heart to care for me, I might not to-day be the man I am. But you were cold to me and my love; and it went back from you to France. And now she is all in all to me, and it is too late for anything but death to come between us."

"You say to yourself, in your heart, 'Not even death shall part us,' do you not? You tell yourself, 'Let me live but for another year; and then, whether I live or die, my name will have become one to be for ever associated with that of France.' Go, then, Louis," the girl went on; "go where the glory you so long for is to be

gained; and we two weak women will go back to our lonely home in the Cevennes, and watch there for news of you, and pray for you."

"Bella," he answered, "I want you to make two promises to me. First, that if I fall in one of the defeats I foresee are coming on us, you will try to cherish some little regard for my memory—such as a sister might feel for the brother she has lost."

"Ask something else of me, Louis. A brother you have always been to me—a dear and kind one. No one else can ever be to me quite what you have been."

"We are brother and sister, then," he said, taking her hand. "Sister, will you take great care of our mother for all our sakes? I want you to make her feel, if you can, that her prayers will be heard—that God will spare me to come back to her. Can you make her feel this, do you think?"

"I will try."

"You will be very tender and loving with her—that I know; but I want you also to be cheerful with her. She will fall

into lower and lower spirits—will she not?
—left in that gloomy old house in the Cevennes; and you, who are naturally a little melancholy and downcast—forgive me for saying so, Bella—must brighten into something of a sunbeam for her sake."

- "Your letters will be the only sunshine that can reach her. You must write very often, Louis."
- "I will write whenever the chances of the campaign allow me; but there will come times when writing will be impossible —perhaps even times when it may be better not to write. It is at such times that I rely on you to be at your bravest and brightest, Bella—that you must cheer her by your own cheerfulness about me, and seem so hopeful of my safe return that she will not dare to allow herself to doubt of it."
- "I will do my best. You may trust her to me, Louis."
- "I know it," he said, lifting her hand to his lips, and kissing it. "And God bless you for your truth to her, my dear sister."

Perhaps, if he had said to her at that moment, as he had said a year before, "Cousin, will you be my wife?" she would have answered "Yes;" and out of his love for her it might have come to pass that a strange, sad page of the future would never have been written. But all his thoughts were, as he had truly said, with France: and the mixed feelings of affection, compassion, and a readiness to sacrifice herself that strove within her were not love; and therefore it may have been well for both of them that their hands unclasped without firther words having been spoken between them, and that no betrothal kiss from his lips was pressed on hers. But often—often. when the panorama of that awful year outspread itself again before her, and there looked on her as through a blood-red mist the face of Roland, a summer's eve in Paris seemed to rise bright on Isabel, and voices -sad as the words they whispered-to sigh softly in her soul, "It might have heen."

A week later, and Roland's mother and

cousin were on their way back to the Cevennes; and the young soldier himself was hastening eastward to Metz. His colonel's application had been more successful than his own; he was ordered to join at once the garrison of that fortress, where every preparation was already making for a siege. For Wörth and Weissenburg had just been fought: the shattered remnants of McMahon's corps d'armée were falling back in wild disorder; and darkly, swiftly, steadily, the clouds of Prussian cavalry and the endless column of their infantry swept on across the frontier, and pressed forward along the poplar-lined highways that led deeper and deeper into the heart of France. And at each new blow that was struck by the sword of the invader, the Empire, that gorgeous fabric of tyranny, whose foundations were laid in the slime of corruption, and whose cement was blood, rocked and quivered to its base.

## CHAPTER XIV.

## ANTHONY'S SERMON.

WE adventurers into the realm of Dreamland, whose veracious reports of the lives led by the inhabitants of that country go by the name of novels, are strictly required by its laws to forget our own poor identity while treating of a race so august, and to live only in our dreams. Unhappily, there are dreams and dreams; and one that has just now perched itself on the tip of my pen, and has driven to a distance its brethren that legitimately have business there, will on no persuasion consent to be exorcised until I have made such imperfect attempt as in me lies to body it forth in words. A poor shadow that clings shivering to the point of one's pen, and entreats humbly that you will do your charitable best to give it substance! I incline my ear to its petition; and it whispers in it, "As you write——"

"As you write, the volume of Nature called Lakeland is opening at its brightest leaf. As the earliest look of spring falls on the banks of Duddon, there laughs up responsive—to borrow the imagery of Shelley -a light of daffodils. The same golden scarf girdles Ulleswater; and a broidery equally delicate is traced in violet, primrose, and anemone along the shores of Windermere and Derwentwater. Still a month. and the kisses of the sun will be melting the last snow from the slopes of Helvellyn and Skiddaw; and only such ravines as that of Mickledore on Scawfell will retain the whiteness that as yet is nowhere wholly replaced by green. The spring, so wan in London, is everywhere, between Furness and Penrith, 'fair, and very fair.'"

And then my dream entreats of me again to give it being; and I look at it for a moment, and in the next am writing:—

"... Silent mere of Wastwater! voiceless precipices that rise beyond! fretted with the roar of London, and solitary among its crowds-I for a moment lay aside my pen, and look from the window before me in vain search of that sky which the smoke-cloud covers, other vapours that take their source in Time and blur the atmosphere of Memory are at the same instant drifted aside, and—beautiful as the blue heaven breaking through a stormthere shine out on me the lonely valley and embosoming crags that I trod so lightly, and loved so well. It is years since; and the world and I are both older; and there have been taken from the ways of life feet the absence of which makes those crowded paths seem strangely lonely to me; but for the moment the ancient scenes are as fresh to the eye of the mind as though I had looked on them but yesterday; and the wonder of the Lakeland May-time floats before me in a dream. Dream-like, but so strangely real that I can scarce believe them phantoms, Kirkfell and the Pillar rise

to sight; the one steep, yet softened into something of a hilly look by the ever-climbing grass; the other frowning in stony ruggedness, every feature of its majestic desolation threatening peril to limb and life. Close at hand ascend the unscalable precipices of Great Gavel, and the ravinescored loneliness of Scawfell: and in the near foreground, the few homes of Wastdale Head, scarce enough in number to be termed a village-lie grouped near gloomy Wastwater, specks lost in the sea of prospect. A moment the sunlight of dreamland falls upon them, brightening mere and crag into a glow of colour such as the veritable sunshine bestows upon the red-tinted Screes that wall in the Burnmoor side of Wastwater; then mists drift over the prospect as in rain-time I have known a grey veil blot from sight Scawfell and its companion mountains; and the whole fair picture . . . "

I had clothed my dream in the fairest words that were mine to offer, and its thankfulness to me is that scarce has it shape ere it is fled. Ungrateful! But the patient shadows whose place it had usurped draw near again, forgiving the foolish preference I had accorded; and as I greet them, they whisper words that are a charm; and in a moment more I am in Wastdale . . .

Sitting one August evening beside his granddaughter when a wonderful glory of sunset was burning in the western sky, Anthony Clifford all at once laid his hand upon the girl's fair head, as it drooped over the pages of her book, and called her attention from the novel she was reading.

"Daisy, my little lass," he said, with a solemnity of manner somewhat unusual in the rough old hermit, "did you ever wish that, besides the face of an angel, God had given you the wings of one; and so you could fly off straight to heaven?"

"To heaven, grandfather," said Daisy, astonished at the question. The pair were sitting, side by side, on the bench beneath the apple-tree in the garden; and through the boughs there broke at the moment the

last kisses of the sunlight, and rested burningly on the girl's upturned face and shining hair. "Oh, grandfather, I'm not fit to go to heaven."

"Far fitter, I'm afraid, than your old grandfather. Daisy, my lass, I've but a sorry story to tell to Heaven of the way in which I have spent my eighty years on earth. When the day comes—and it surely must be very near now—for me to be called before the great Taskmaster of us all, and render Him account of the work I have done for Him, I fear He'll say to me something very different from either, 'Thou faithful servant,' or 'Well done.' It is near sixty years since I was ordained His minister; and for aught I know I have not a sinner saved to show Him. I doubt. Daisy, if my sermons ever profited much the ears that listened to them."

Daisy nestled closer to him. "You dear, silly old grandfather," she said. "Why, I've heard—every one says it—that you were the finest preacher in Cumberland in your time. It was because you were so

celebrated for your eloquence and learning that Lord Ralston—I mean the Lord Ralston who is dead now—chose you to be tutor to his son."

"Ay; and a jewel of a tutor I was to the lad. George Ralston might even now, I fancy, read 'Strait is the gate and narrow is the way' in the original tongue, for I hardly think he can have unlearned the whole of the Greek I dinned into him while he was under my care; but as for being one of the few who find that gate, and are themselves found in that way--" The old clergyman broke off, and threw a sufficiently dreary look upon the flaming western sky. "Daisy," he said, abruptly, "there's another gate that the Bible tells us of, and to my fancy yonder sunset must be like it. I doubt, my lass, I'll see it shut upon me. 'For without,' says Scripture, 'shall be whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.' And I made but a lie, I fear, of my task of educating George Ralston."

<sup>&</sup>quot;Oh, grandfather!" Daisy protested.

<sup>&</sup>quot;Ay, he's seemly enough—if that's what

you would say—to eyes that look only at the face of man—eyes like yours, my lass. But God, my girl, sees deep into the heart. In poor George's heart, I fear, He'll see things that will in no way please Him—irreligion, and suspicion of his kind, and a love of such pleasant vices as we are told by the man whose writings come nearest in inspiration to the Scriptures, God in the end turns into whips to scourge us with. If George Ralston were ever to ask a woman to be his wife, I'd tell him when I heard of it that he was cruelly wronging her, for that I knew him to be already married."

## "Grandfather!"

Old Anthony smiled; and, leaning towards his granddaughter, stroked her hair.

- "My little lass," he said, "Lord George, to my certain knowledge, has at least three wives. Would you care to hear their names?"
- "Yes," the girl said in a low voice, and looking down.
- "The Lust of the Eyes, the Lust of the Flesh, and the Pride of Life. Daughters of

the Devil, Daisy, all of them; and able to do more mischief to a man than any daughter ever born to Eve. I'm afraid sometimes, my little lass, lest these wives that George Ralston has hung like mill-stones round his neck should drag him down as deep as hell. Ay; and when the Lord says to me, 'Cain, where is thy brother?' I'll peer fearfully down into the nether pit, perhaps, and see poor George there, and a place prepared for me at his side."

"You, grandfather! You who are so good!"

"A whited sepulchre, my lass—a whited sepulchre. I'm eighty-one years old, and for more than fifty of them I have called myself a servant of the Lord; but if He has many such slothful labourers as me in the vineyard of the world, I'm not surprised that it should be so choked with thorns. What seed of the Word could I hope to plant in other hearts when my own was so naked of a spiritual harvest? Many a morning have I spent in reading with

George Ralston in some Greek or Latin author; but very few in expounding to him the wisdom that is higher than any that was taught by Plato or Socrates; many a lesson have I set him in the history of Athens or Rome, but very seldom did I trouble him with the history of his Lord and mine. A slothful servant, Daisy, an unprofitable and slothful servant. I have failed to do my Master's work on earth; and when at the Day of Judgment I cry to Him, 'Lord! Lord!' He will profess to me, 'I never knew you;' and will say to His angels, 'Cast ve this unprofitable servant into the outer darkness.' Youder sunset, Daisy, is strangely like the city of gold, and jasper, and sapphire that we read of in the Apocalypse; but the city wherein I am like to dwell for all eternity will be of fire."

- "Oh, grandfather!" the girl said, with a shudder.
- "My little lass, when the man appointed to speak forth God's truth has preached it all his life as if it were the Devil's lie,

and he felt shame in what he had to say, for what reward can such a traitor look but that prepared for Satan and his angels? I'll hold myself a happy man if, when the books of the Recording Angel are opened, it shall be found that in the fifty years of my ministry I have won even a single soul to God. You were a child in the cradle, my lass, when I went for the last time into the pulpit. Did I ever tell you of the text I chose on that occasion?"

"No, grandfather, I don't remember that you did."

"It was from the last letter of that grand man, Paul, the noblest and bravest of the Apostles, to his disciple, Timothy. 'I have finished my course,' were the words that I selected. Self-deceiver that I was, I said in my own heart, 'I have fought a good fight.' Looking back this evening, Daisy, on the course I had brought to a close that Sabbath, I want no more evidence than the text I took and the comment I made on it in secret, to show me how true it is that, 'The heart of man is deceitful and despe-

rately wicked.' They told me that the sermon I am speaking of was one of the most stirring I ever preached. God knew then; and I know now, my girl," said old Anthony sorrowfully, "that any little eloquence there might be in my words was of the lips and not of the heart."

For a time both the speaker and the girl who listened to him were silent.

"I have another sermon that I'd like to preach before I die. There may be nothing in it that will please the ear; but at least it shall come truly from the heart. My little lass, although these eyes of mine are too old and dim to search very closely into a young girl's heart, I have seen of late that something very much like love is hid away in yours; and I don't think, Daisy, that it is the love of God."

Daisy had been looking at him all this time; but now she turned her head away, and hid her burning face in the pages of her book. "Grandfather!" she said entreatingly.

"My little lassie, I don't mean to scold you. I've noticed many times within the last few weeks how pale your cheeks have been, and what a weary look there was in those blue eyes; but the anger that I felt was all against the man. The fool, the fool, to think that, though he searched through all the nations of the earth, he could find a bonnier flower to wear in marriage than the little Daisy that was longing for him to place her in his bosom! But he's proud—proud and selfish both, I fear, is poor Lord George."

"George!"

"Ay; George Ralston. Did you think, my lass, that you could keep your secret locked up in that foolish little heart of yours?"

By way of answer, Daisy laid her head upon his shoulder, and began to weep. "Oh, grandfather," she sobbed out, "I'm very miserable."

"So said Calypso, my girl, when Ulysses ran away from her, and went back into the great world again, just as Ralston has gone from you. 'Calypso ne pouvait se consoler.' She dried her tears in the end, though, as you'll have sense enough to do."

Daisy shook her head; and wept on silently.

"My lass, these disappointments happen every day to thousands of the poor daughters of poor, weak Eve. One year, the heart is wounded and the eyes weep tears of disappointment; the next the wound is healed and the eyes are dry again; and by the time a third summer is come to poor, forsaken Calypso, Ulysses is as much forgotten as though she and he had never met; and the pretty eyes are bright for some one else. If your old grandfather, Daisy, should be in the churchyard before his dear little granddaughter is taken to have her name changed in the church, your brothers, I hope will, at any rate, live to see you the true and loving wife of some devoted husband, nearer to you in station than Lord Ralston, and a better man than he.

"Never, never, grandfather! Oh, grand-

father, I'll never be a wife!" said Daisy, wildly.

Old Anthony looked at her in some surprise. "Ay, my lass," he said; "and is the hurt so deep? When those pretty eyes of yours are setting honest hearts on fire, will you tell whatever lovers come to you to speak of marriage that you are bent on living single? I'd never have dreamed, Daisy, that my little linnet could sing so like the nightingale the Greeks called Sappho. What, has God put millions upon millions of men in the world; and to you it seems that there's but one? It's a pity, my lass, that, before making an idol of one of His creatures, you had not learned to worship your Creator. It's a sore reproach to your old grandfather that he should have trained you up so ill. We must tell Harry, when he comes next week to visit us, of the sore heart-sickness that his sister is troubled with.

"Tell Harry!" she repeated, with a startled look.

"Ay; tell Harry that there's a little lass

in Wastdale here who is sick of love—sick to death, she thinks herself. What medicine will Harry prescribe, I wonder? Another visit to London, perhaps, to be his house-keeper for a month or two."

"But, grandfather, I had much rather stay in Wastdale."

"What, my lass, alone with an old man of eighty! Rather see the rocks of Wastdale than the gaieties of London! I doubt if many girls of eighteen would choose as my foolish little woman wants to choose. Better think twice—better think twice, my little lass. I'll find a few sovereigns for you to put in your purse as spending money; and Harry himself will be only too ready to treat you to concerts and entertainments, and all the rest of it."

"No, grandfather, I don't want to leave you."

Old Anthony shook his head dissentingly. "Ay, my lass," he said; "you would tell another tale, I doubt, if George Ralston were to ask you whether you would follow him. But he'll never ask for that little

hand in marriage—it would be too sad a mésalliance. George is a peer of the realm—an aristocrat, whose great-grandfather got an honest living from his shop; and we Cliffords—lord, lord, what does it matter to a man of my age that his ancestor was slain at Towton fight! It would suit my years and calling better to remember that another of my forefathers was a shepherd-lord, the 'good Lord Clifford' that traditions tell us of. What is it that Wordsworth says of him—

'Love had he found in huts where poor men lie:
His daily teachers had been woods and rills,
The silence that is in the starry sky,
The sleep that is among the lonely hills.'

Ay; but he had found something more than sleep among the hills. He found a Master there, a Master who came to the orphan boy as he was keeping his flock in sight of Skiddaw, and said to him, "I am the Good Shepherd. My sheep hear my voice, and they follow Me.' Daisy, my pet lamb, did you ever hear that voice?"

Daisy looked up quickly at him, and shook her head.

"Ay, my lass; but did you ever listen for it? When the world, the flesh, and the devil are all three busy tempting us, it's but seldom we can hear the voice of Christ. Their voices are all loud ones; and Christ's is but a whisper, still and small like that of conscience. My little woman is too pure of heart, I hope, for the devil and the flesh to have power over her; but her vain pretty little head seems to me to be, like all women's heads, a giddy one; and it gets giddier at times, I fear, with hearkening to the tempting promises of the world. What's this book that you are reading, Daisy?"

The old clergyman took it up; and lifted his eyebrows in a slight expression of disdain as he glanced at the inscription upon the title-page: "How we live now. A Novel. By Archer Munden, author of 'The Coming Stroke!' etc." "'The Coming Stroke; what kind of stroke, I wonder. To mangle some of the

grandest words of grand old Will the mighty man of Avon:—

'O, that high heaven
Would put in every critic's hand a whip
To lash such authors. . . . .'

My lass, this writer's novels are scarcely the most shining things in English fiction. I don't know whether the world may not deserve much that Mr. Munden says of it, but it surely cannot all be true. Where did you get the book?"

"Sir Thomas Dallas left this and some others for me, when he went away."

"Ay," said the old clergyman, "it's the kind of reading that would suit Sir Thomas Dallas. What do you think of the trash, Daisy?"

"It's silly, and poor, and vulgar," said the girl. "Give it to old Sarah to light the fire with, grandfather. I don't wish to finish it."

Old Anthony closed the book, and flung it from him on the grass. "Vade retro,"

he said, "vade retro. What shall I end with, Daisy? I can't say 'Sathanas' to so poor a thing as that. Let it lie; it would be waste of time to seek a name for such a trifle. Ah, my lass, I wish it were as easy to fling from us another worthless trifle—the piece of worthlessness called the world. What does your heart say to you, Daisy? Can you find in it a wish to leave the world, and follow Christ?"

"I—I—Oh, grandfather, I'm too wicked a girl ever to be a Christian. You said that I was vain and worldly; but I'm worse. I'm——" Daisy's voice was choked in sobs.

"You are my own dearest little lassie," the old man said, drawing her to him with rugged tenderness, "my little ewe-lamb that I want to see numbered in the flock of Christ. You have worse faults you say, Daisy, than vanity and worldliness. Does that mean that since George Ralston went away to Switzerland you have hated Heaven for suffering him to leave you; and have felt wicked, miserable thoughts come into

your mind at times; as if you could give your soul to win him back?"

The girl's lips parted as if she were about to speak; but nothing except a sob escaped her. She looked strangely at her grandfather for a moment; and then her head drooped on her breast.

"I said there was a sermon I would like to preach before I died. It's the last I'll ever deliver, Daisy, whether in the pulpit or out of it; and it shall be the shortest. 'There is, that maketh himself rich, yet hath nothing'—the wisest of men furnishes me the text. If you had the desire of your heart, my little lass, and were Lady Ralston, you would still have nothing."

Again the girl looked up at him; and this time there seemed to hover upon her lips a faint strange something, that was, and yet was not, a smile.

"My poor Daisy," the old man proceeded, such a husband as Lord George could never make you happy. He has wasted his youth, my girl, as many men in his position, and with his riches, are accustomed to

waste it; and the woman that he marries will find that he can give her nothing but the dregs of life and the ashes of a heart. If he were tempted by your beauty into marrying you, in a month or two he would tire of his new toy and think that he had paid too high a price for it."

- "His toy, grandfather?"
- "My lass, to such men as poor George Ralston, women are nothing more or better than toys. He has trifled, I fear, with more than one or two poor creatures in his time; and has filled eyes with tears and hearts with shame and sorrow; but no foolish girl that ever took his false vows for true coin. and gave him herself in return can have suffered as my little Margaret would suffer, were she to become his wife. God, who gave you an angel's face, my girl, gave you, I fear, a very jealous heart. Where you have placed any part of your affection, you want the person whom you love, though it were only your old grandfather, to show love in return to no living creature but yourself. Am I speaking truth, my little lass?"

She made answer to him only by her silence.

"Thank Heaven then, my girl, that it has afflicted you only with disappointed love; and that jealousy, hatred, and despair, are not tearing at your heart like so many furies. As certainly as the wind shifts from one quarter of the heavens to another, George Ralston would leave you, were you married to him. We read in the Scriptures that when Esther pleased the king Ahasuerus he put her in the place of Vashti. That was lawful in his time and land; but it would be a deadly sin in ours. How would you feel towards a husband who should make you play the part of Vashti?"

"I'd hate him," said Daisy impetuously.
"I would want to kill him."

"Hate him! want to kill him! do you say? Ay; a womanly feeling—a womanly enough feeling, no doubt; but it seems strange that such a passion as hatred could ever look out of such blue eyes, or that jealousy and anger could combine to change my gentle little Daisy from a woman to a

tigress. So, my lass, your case would be worse even than that spoken of by Solomon. The world would see in you a girl raised from nothing to a great station, and from poverty to be the sharer of an enormous income; and it would think your lot most enviable and fortunate. I doubt, though, if any of the poor wives of working men, whose drunken husbands kick and beat them, would envy you, if they could look into your heart."

## "Grandfather!"

"For, if they should look, my lass, they would find it like the hearts of the damned wretches in the Eastern story, and burning day and night with fire from hell. Better even to be that which the Wise King speaks of—rich, and yet possessed of nothing—than to be rich, and possessed by the same demons that in the play make a madman and a murderer of poor Othello. Ay; and in many ways the text I quoted would apply to you; and my Lady Ralston, though so rich, would be a very beggar, begging her husband for a little love, and finding that he

had none to give—begging Heaven, as vainly as Dives in the parable besought a drop of water, for a single hour's peace of mind, and finding her heart and brain still burn and burn. A viscountess's coronet would you have, my lass? It would burn that poor forehead in a year or two, as though it were the crown of red-hot iron that the Hungarian rebel was made to wear."

"Grandfather!" said Daisy again.

"You mean, I suppose, I'm wandering from my text. It's a privilege of preachers, my girl—texts are like the Fairy Paribanou's tent, that would cover on occasion three feet of ground or three thousand. A few words more, though; and my tiresome sermon will be ended. You remember what Hamlet says to his mother—perhaps, though, you remember nothing at all about the play; for that foolish little head of yours, like all the women's skulls I have ever met with, is too weakly furnished with brains to relish such strong meat as glorious Will. Well, Hamlet cries out to the Queen in the scene where he kills Polonius; 'Look

here upon this picture, and——' Ay; you know something of the quotation, I see."

"Does not every one know it, grandfather, that has ever read Hamlet!"

"Ay, my lass; but how should I be supposed to know that my foolish, novelloving little Daisy would care for reading such a work as Hamlet? Your grandfather, then, is like the melancholy Dane in so far that there are a couple of word-pictures he would like to paint. Here's the original of the first before me," old Anthony continued, taking her hand, "a virgin creature of eighteen, pure in soul and body—as lovely a flower as ever grew up happy and healthy in wholesome country air. She has sickened a little of late with the fever of love; and has let a foolish melancholy, if I may quote from glorious Will again—

'like a worm i' th' bud Feed on that damask cheek:'

but she's young and strong; and if she carries her ailments to the Physician Scrip-

ture tells of—the only one that can minister to a mind diseased—next year's flowers will see her as fresh and blooming as themselves. An angel-like creature, with blue eyes that no evil demon of a bad passion ever looked out of, and lips that until within the last few weeks never knew what it was to sigh, and a brow on which sorrow has not written the faintest commencement of the hieroglyphics we call wrinkles. but take this flower away from the pure mountain air and earth that nourished it, and put it in the foul hothouse of societycurse it with the blight of a roué husbandand what will the poor daisy change to? A nettle, my girl, a venomous, ugly weed, fit only to be cast with other weeds into those terrible flames of despair and remorsethat Eternity will one day burn with. Daisy, I have thanked my Maker in the course of my fourscore years far more seldom than became a man who was in name His servant; but," the old man went on, rising to his feet, and speaking, although tenderly, with something of vehemence, "I thank

Him from my inmost heart that He has not suffered you to be Lord George's wife. One other, and greater favour, I still pray God for; and if it were granted me, I almost believe that, faithless servant though I have been, and heavy chastisement though I fear hereafter, I could say with Simeon, 'Lord, now lettest Thou me depart in peace.' My little Margaret, the child and blessing of my age, dare these old eyes hope that before they close for ever they will see in you a child of Christ?"

For all answer, Daisy broke into a passion of tears; and fled away towards the house. "Oh, cruel girl!" the old man heard her sob out as she passed him; "oh, wicked creature that I am!"

### CHAPTER XV.

#### DALILAH.

"A LADY to see you, sir," said a dirty maidservant, suddenly introducing her head and shoulders through the half-open door of the study in which Mr. Busby Tickell, in a négligé composed of dressing-gown and greasy skull-cap, sat chewing the cud of a mathematical difficulty. "Her name's Mrs. Sprott, sir, but she wouldn't tell me what her business was."

"I'll tell you what your own is, you hussy—to find somebody to teach you manners. How dare you come in without knocking? Show the lady into the drawing-room; and say to her that I'll be with her in five minutes," responded her irate employer.

When Mr. Tickell, the skull-cap dis-

carded, and the dressing-gown exchanged for a coat somewhat more cleanly than that garment, made his appearance in the drawing-room, he found waiting for him a stout lady, with a face red as the reddest blossom in her bonnet, but more expressive of good living than good temper.

"Sit down, ma'am, pray sit down again," he said, hurrying towards her, as she rose in recognition of his entrance. "Mrs. Sprott, I think, my servant said. A boy you are thinking of sending me, no doubt. Two, perhaps, or is it three? Moderate terms, ma'am—moderate terms; and, though I say it myself, an instructor who'll——Ma'am, there's not a man in England but myself who teaches Latin as that language should be taught."

"I don't doubt it, Mr. Tickell," said the lady; "but——"

"It's my system, ma'am, that makes my school the first in London. I have spent forty years in perfecting that system; and when I die it will die with me. I've been asked to write a work upon it—my friends

have hinted more than once that if I did so, I'd leave a name behind me that in future times would compare with that of Socrates—the greatest teacher, ma'am, among the Greeks; but the duty I owe to my pupils has prevented me. To write my book I must neglect my school; and my conscience won't allow me. No, ma'am, I prefer sacrificing my immortality to sacrificing my pupils. The boy you think of sending me—what age is he, may I ask?"

- "My little Billy? He's too young to go to school yet, Mr. Tickell. I might let you have him in a year or two, perhaps. He would not have to associate with any vulgar companions in your school, I hope."
- "Vulgar, ma'am! My pupils! The cream of Kensington, ma'am—the cream of Kensington and Bayswater."
- "But the under-masters, Mr. Tickell? One can't, of course, know much about such a class of people; but I've heard that they are often low, coarse, vulgar wretches. Vulgarity's a shocking, infectious thing; a sort of moral small-pox one might call it.

Really, Mr. Tickell, I must write that idea down—it will do for my next novel. A novel need not have many ideas, to be sure, but they come in very well among other things.

- "You had a low fellow lately, as a master, that you were obliged to send away, I believe," the lady continued, when her note-book had been hastily produced and scribbled in. "A young man of the name of Clifford."
- "Yes, ma'am," said Tickell, briefly. "What of him? Is he in Newgate, waiting to be tried for murder?"
- "In Newgate, Mr. Tickell! Oh, dear no; he's sub-editor of a weekly newspaper."
- "Some filthy, atheistical publication, I suppose. We live in shocking times, ma'am—times when one might almost believe, with the benighted Papists of the Middle Ages, that it was the devil who invented printing. What's the name of the paper, may I ask?"
- "It's one of the best in London, Mr. Tickell—the journal of good society—'Men and Women.'"

"What, ma'am, Mr. Munden's publication! How in the world did a man like Munden come to engage such a person as this Clifford for his sub-editor?"

"Oh, it was the nobleman the journal belongs to who made this shocking mistake. Dear Lord Ralston!—he's the kindest soul alive; but so deficient in knowledge of the world. Entre nous, too, Mr. Tickell, his lordship—the Ralston peerage, you know, only dates back to George IV.—has not that power of detecting vulgarity you would expect of a man in his position. Hodgson—that's my husband—said the first time he set eyes upon this Clifford that the fellow behaved as if he were ignorant of the ways of decent people; but—would you believe it?—his lordship persists in fancying that the low creature is a gentleman."

"Gentleman, ma'am!—a blackguard—a foul-mouthed, insolent blackguard. He behaved so violently to me after I had given him notice to leave, that I was more than once on the point of calling in a policeman. Swore, ma'am—positively swore at

- me. One morning, about a week before he left, he actually tried to excite my pupils to a mutiny."
- "Oh," cried the lady, "if Lord Ralston could but hear all this!"
- "Besides, ma'am, the young ruffian is an atheist. Reads Voltaire, and Shelley, and Tom Paine, and I don't know who. He's a republican, too—belongs to some society, I believe; and attends Bradlaugh's meetings in Hyde Park."
- "Have you seen him at them, Mr. Tickell?"
- "Me, ma'am—do you suppose a gentleman would be seen in the neighbourhood of
  such a rabble? Two of my pupils saw
  him; they were crossing Hyde Park on
  their way back from—from a walk to Westminster Abbey; and happened to get among
  the crowd. You may fancy what these
  young gentlemen's feelings were, when
  they saw this Clifford—their tutor, ma'am,
  a person they were required to treat with
  respect—with his coat off, and some of his
  pothouse companions holding it and cheer-

ing him on—fighting like a prizefighter among some of the lowest ruffians in all London."

# "Shocking!"

- "And when I asked him for an explanation of his conduct, he had the impudence to tell me that it mattered nothing to me whether he were an atheist, or a republican, or both. Me, ma'am—that have the sons of the best people of Kensington and Bayswater in my school, young gentlemen that I am training up as Christians and loyal subjects—he had the impudence to tell me that!"
- "He did not deny, then, that he held the same dreadful opinions as Bradlaugh and Odger, and those other horrible creatures who want to turn the House of Lords out of doors, and cut off the Queen's head?"
- "Deny, ma'am!—the ruffian positively gloried in it."
- "The horrid wretch! Really, Mr. Tickell, poor Lord Ralston ought to be informed of the shocking character of the person he has taken into his employment out of charity."

"Well, ma'am," said Tickell, "can't you tell him? Your husband, I understood you to say, knows something of his lordship."

"O yes; Hodgson and dear Lord George are the best friends imaginable. It was only the other day his lordship was saying to Mr. Munden that the paper could not go on, if it were not for my husband's articles. So gentlemanly, Lord Ralston said they were; and, at the same time, so spirited and interesting. But you see, Mr. Tickell, his lordship is a peculiar man, and has some very eccentric notions. For one thing, he would not hear a word against this Mr. Clifford, except from somebody who knew him well."

"Well, ma'am; and if I, whose house was daily polluted with this young atheist's presence for a period of four months (thank heaven that I did not engage him as resident tutor, or we might have been murdered in our beds), were to tell his lordship what I knew of him, and how the fellow has behaved to me?"

"He'd dismiss him, Mr. Tickell," cried

the lady, eagerly. "Dear Lord Ralston may be a little eccentric—people do say that as a boy he was not quite right in his mind; but he has very gentlemanly feelings; and I'm sure if he knew his sub-editor was a republican and an atheist, and had talked of cutting your throat—did you not say he had talked of cutting your throat?—he would dismiss him that very moment."

- "Well, ma'am, I'll call upon his lordship as soon as I can find time, and let him know what a ruffian the fellow is."
- "My dear Mr. Tickell, if it were only possible! But Lord Ralston's unfortunately abroad at present—travelling for his health my husband says."
- "I can write to him, ma'am," said Tickell.
- "My dear, good Mr. Tickell, need we trouble poor Lord Ralston about such a matter at all? He must be dreadfully ill, or he would never have run away abroad in this strange manner, so soon after returning from spending two whole years in America, among bears and cannibal Indians. The

news would excite him frightfully; think Mr. Tickell, how a nobleman would feel when he found that a person in his employment was a Republican who carried pistols about him-I'm certain Mr. Clifford carries a revolver in his pocket—and talked of imitating that horrid character in Roman History—Brutus, I think he was called who murdered Pompey the First, and all the Roman aristocracy. I'd hardly answer for poor Lord Ralston's life if, in his delicate state of health, he were to hear such news -doctors always tell us, you know, that if a patient is excited they won't answer for his life. No, don't write to poor Lord Ralston—write to Mr. Munden."

"To Mr. Munden, ma'am?"

"Yes; put all you know about the horrid wretch who is his sub-editor on paper; and send it at once to Archer Munden. He's disgusted with this low creature his lord-ship has picked up out of the gutter, and forced upon him—he'd jump, I am sure, at an excuse for sending him about his business."

"Ma'am, I'll give my scoundrel of an usher a character this very day. I think, ma'am, we understand each other."

Tickell rose, and the lady imitated him.

- "My dear Mr. Tickell," she said, graciously, "it's delightful to meet with a man who understands so well the duties he owes to society. I'm sure, if the dear Queen understood hers half as well, we should soon be rid of all these low, dreadful wretches who hold meetings in Hyde Park."
  - "Ma'am!"
- "There's a character in the Arabian Nights who made pepper-tarts—no, creamcheese, I think it was—so well, that the Sultan rewarded him by letting him be Sultan for a day. I've often wished, Mr. Tickell, that I could be Queen Victoria for a day."

Tickell took out his snuff-box, and helped himself to a pinch. "Væ civitate," he muttered.

"Was it Greek or Hebrew you were quoting then, Mr. Tickell?" his visitor asked.

- "Latin, ma'am—Latin."
- "Well, Mr. Tickell, even Latin is not a language that should always be used in a lady's presence. But as I was saying, if dear Victoria understood her duties, or if I were regina in her place—that's Latin for queen, Mr. Tickell, I think—the Duke of Cambridge would be sent—for, really, he ought to do something to earn his salary as commander-in-chief—into Hyde Park, to warn these people that they are committing treason by meeting there."
  - "Well, ma'am?"
- "Surely, Mr. Tickell, a man like you, as clever, you say, as Socrates—wasn't it Socrates' son Plato, by the way, that first kept an academy?—ought to guess the rest. The low wretches would begin throwing stones at the dear Duke—if a gentleman speaks to them, they always answer by throwing stones; and somebody would read the Riot Act; and the Duke would draw his sword, and say 'Charge!' Then, I suppose, if any of the leaders had not been killed in the charge they would be put in

prison and hanged; and the poor creatures they had deluded shipped off to Australia, or somewhere, or sentenced to penal servitude for life; -it's treating them far too mercifully; but, as Shakespeare makes Henry VIII. say, mercy becomes a king of England even better than his crown. And then, Mr. Tickell, as Scripture says, the land would be at peace; and we of the upper orders could do our duty in that station of life to which God has called us without any danger of being guillotined, and having our heads stuck on Temple Bar. I'm certain that if ever Mr. Clifford and the dreadful wretches he associates with got the upper hand, they would put our heads on spikes or pikes; I forget which it is those horrid republicans always use; and set them up on Temple Bar."

Tickell bowed; to hide a smile, perhaps. "Ma'am," he observed, "you're a Solomon in petticoats."

"In petticoats, sir," said the lady, "a Solomon in petticoats! Upon my word, Mr. Tickell, I feel anything but flattered by

your language. Such an indelicate expression! and then, too, the idea of comparing my sex to yours! It's quite odious enough, let me tell you, to live among you men, and have you for brothers and husbands, and so on, without being told we're like you. If you had said, now, that I was like the Queen of Sheba, or that I talked like that famous woman among the Greeks—the great orator Expatia, I mean, from whose name we get our verb to expatiate, and who was wife of the sculptor, Pericles, and worshipped after her death as Goddess of Wisdom—"

Tickell, feeling as some passionate worshipper of Greek art, before whose eyes a barbarian had just knocked off the nose from a statue of Phidias, might have felt, ventured on a slight remonstrance. "Aspasia, ma'am," he interrupted, "you mean Aspasia."

"I said Expatia, Mr. Tickell; and I believe that I'm correct in saying so. We have no verb 'to aspasiate' in the English language, have we?"

"No, ma'am, but——"

"Well, then, that decides the question. I'm surprised certainly, Mr. Tickell, that a man in your position should be at fault about so familiar a name as that of the great Expatia; but perhaps you have studied the language and literature of the Greeks more closely than their history. Good-day, my dear Mr. Tickell,—don't forget, in writing to Mr. Munden, to give all the particulars you can of the secret societies that you say his sub-editor is connected with."

## CHAPTER XVI.

### THE PILLAR ROCK.

Released for a fortnight from London and his labours there, the sub-editor of "Men and Women," one evening towards the end of August, saw with satisfaction the lines of houses beginning to exchange themselves for fields as the night-express from Euston dashed on at a gallant rate towards the North. Early next morning he was spending a dreaming hour among the crumbling walls and luxuriant verdure of the ruined Abbey of Furness; and as a remembrance of the lovely scenery of the Duddon impelled him, further, to approach Wastdale by way of that water-fairy of a river; and as he halted midway between Broughton and Ulpha, for a plunge into a trout-haunted

pool that lay, dark and tempting, beneath overhanging trees; and the Undine of which, if an Undine it had, could seldom have listened to any other voices than those of wind and bird; sunset died out of the western sky while he was still lingering among the woods of Eskdale: and the white harvest-moon rode high in the serene night-heaven at the moment when, braced and freshened by the pure air of heathery Burnmoor, the traveller paused before descending into Wastdale; and saw by the light of the moonbeams the familiar face of the mere welcoming him with a shining look of calm. A few lights glimmered from the still distant farmhouses of Wastdale Head; and, looking at them attentively, Clifford could presently distinguish a dim twinkle that came from some room in the house where he had spent the happiest years of his boyhood, and where his sister and grandfather were at that moment waiting to welcome him. "And now," he said to himself, as he hurried on, "to see if her native air has cleared Daisy's little head of

the caprices that London and Ralston put there. How changed she is from the little sister I left here eighteen months ago, when I went out into the world to court that coy jade, Fortune."

The garden-gate of the farm-house was open when he came to it; and passing in, he looked round recognizingly on shrub and flower-bed, lying eerie in the white light of the moon. It seemed to him that the spot had grown in beauty since he saw it last.

"An Eden," he said to himself, "a positive Eden. Where's the little Eve that has made it one, I wonder? Daisy, my truant, it's a sin that on an evening like this you were not watching for your brother in the moonlight here. My little sluggard, if it had been a lover whom you were to kiss and welcome back to-night, he would have found you, to a certainty, watching for him by the garden-gate, a flower among the flowers. Shall I see the door there open, and her face peep out, if I sit down for a while on the seat under the old

apple-tree? I'll light a cigar, and try, at least."

Leaning back against the well-known trunk, and watching with dreamy eyes the silvery play of the moonbeams upon grass and leaf, the young man, without knowing why, was presently reminded by that cold, white light of the uncanny phosphorescence sometimes seen shining above a grave. In another moment a shiver ran through his frame: and there came on him such a strange sense of companionship that he leaped to his feet, and walked round the tree-trunk, to assure himself that he was really alone. He saw nothing; but a wild, strange fancy came suddenly upon him. The small churchyard of Wastdale, he remembered, was distant from him not above two hundred yards; and he told himself that perhaps one of the dead, tempted out of his grave by the calm beauty of the night, had wandered into this silent garden, and was with him now beneath the appletree.

He was about to reseat himself, when

something that might have been the nightwind stirring faintly among the leaves above him, but that to his disturbed imagination was curiously like a sigh, struck so uncannily upon his ear that he shivered, and felt for the moment as if his veins ran ice. With a sudden unwillingness to be any longer alone, he walked away towards the house.

The door opening on the garden yielded on his trying it. As he entered, it seemed to him that what might have been the last sigh of a broken heart was a second time breathed close into his ear. He stumbled on along the dark passage, shivering, and feeling as if something not of earth had entered with him.

A silence as oppressive as a nightmare filled the dwelling. Waiting at the stairfoot to listen for some step or voice, he could distinguish no other sound than the faint ticking of a clock. It reminded him of the superstition of the death-watch. "Margaret!" he called, hoarsely, "Margaret!" It seemed strange to him that he

should be addressing his sister by her name—he, who, perhaps, of all the family had said the oftenest to her, "Daisy."

She did not answer; and, throwing down the handbag that he carried, he ran up to her bedroom, and looked in. Through the undrawn blinds the moon shone in solemn beauty; and filled the little chamber with her light. There were flowers in a glass upon the toilet, drooping, however, and half-faded; and in a cage hanging at the window a canary that his entrance had disturbed, fluttered off its perch with a curious, lamentable little cry, and pecked drowsily at an empty seed-box. This complaining voice was the only one that welcomed him; for the room, he saw at a glance, was empty of its mistress.

The same silence and emptiness met him in the next bedroom that he went into, his grandfather's. He came out of it; and groped slowly down the dark staircase, stopping half-way to repeat, apprehensively, his call of "Margaret!" In one of the rooms towards the front of the house a light

was burning. It was that in which Anthony Clifford had arranged his library; and he often sat here of an evening. His grandson drew a quick breath of relief; and turned the handle of the door, confident that on his entrance two faces would look up from the books over which they had been bending; and that next instant he would be welcomed with a shake of the hand from his grandfather, and a kiss from Daisy.

All that met him, however, was a return of the icy feeling of horror that twice already had crept through him, as if the cold hand of a corpse had touched him. He looked fearfully round the room, almost dreading lest the sickly light of the one candle burning in it should show him here and there dark stains of blood; and that with a horrid cry of "Murdered!" he would fling himself on his knees beside the lifeless bodies of an old man and a girl. There was nothing, however, on the carpet, but some torn fragments of a letter. He picked up one of them mechanically; and caught sight of the words, "forgive," and "wicked," in

the handwriting of his sister. "Forgive"—
"wicked," he said slowly to himself.
"Wicked. My little Daisy."

When the torn scraps of paper had been gathered up and pieced together, his eyes refused for a moment to credit the thing they read. It was very short, this note that made him feel as if the fire of hell had lighted itself in his heart. "Dear, dear grandfather," the girl implored, "if you are too angry to forgive me, try at least to pray for your wicked, wicked Daisy. Oh, I wish -oh, how I wish now that James had taken me with him to New Zealand. He might have taken me if I had told him all; but I dared not tell him who was tempting me to—. Oh, what will he, and my dear brother Harry say, when they hear that the sister they were so proud of has disgraced them! Oh, grandfather, shall I ever see any of you again?"

"Never!"

He got up as that cry broke furiously from his lips; and, staggering like a drunken man, went out into the night. Close beside the garden-entrance of the house grew a large rose-bush that had been his sister's favourite of all her garden-pets. Some of the looser sprays clung to his coat as he was passing; and he turned on the bush with an almost maniacal fury, and tore it from the ground.

"Curse you," he said, stamping on it, and speaking as if to a sentient being, "lie there, and rot, and die. Oh, I wish, oh, how I wish that your mistress were lying dead here at my feet!" He pressed his head for a moment between his two hands; and then threw his arms up wildly, and fell, face forward, on the grass. "My God," he sobbed out, in a voice of bitter anguish, "how I loved her! Oh, my sister, my dear little sister Daisy!"

The noise of some one closing the gardengate presently caught his attention, and made him get upon his feet. It was the old servant of the family who entered; and she shrieked out as she saw him rise.

"Where's my grandfather, Sarah?" he said, recognizing her.

The woman laid her hand upon her breast, and gasped for breath. "Eh, Mester Harry," she said, faintly, "what a turn yo gi'd me! I thawt it wur t' mester's ghaist."

- "Where is he?" Clifford said, hoarsely. "Is he dead?"
- "Th' Lord knaws, lad." She wrung her hands; and broke out into hysterical tears. "Miss Daisy! eh, that ivver t' lass could be so wicked! Mester Harry, yor sister's——"
  - "I know I know," he interrupted.
- "Where's my grandfather, I ask you?"
  - "I knawn't—dead, mebbe, on t' Pillar."
- "The Pillar! On the Pillar at this hour of the night! Has he been away from home, then, since——?"
- "Sin' 'a fand Miss Margaret had left him. Na, that wur yesterday. I went into t' loibery i' t' morning, to call t' mester to breakfast, an' fand him wi' 'a look on his face that fair feart me. 'Eh, sir,' I says, 'what ails yo?'—for I did na knaw but Miss Daisy wur upstairs i' her bed. 'Sarah,' 'a said, 'my little lass is dead.'"

- "Dead!" cried Clifford.
- "'Dead, woman—dead to me, an' to her God,' yor grandfather says; an I saw t' tears wur i' his een. An' then 'a went to her room; an' when 'a saw t' lass hadna been to bed,—'Ay,' 'a says to hisseln, 't' nest's been empty t' whole neet, th' bird has flown too far for me to find her. Oh, the villain, the villain Ralston!' 'A bade me fetch owd Chris Ritson fra t' Huntsman; an' Chris went to Ambleside, an' Edmondson to Keswick; an' t' Cowperthwaites wur sent to Broughton. Tha nivver see'd sich a look as t' mester had when t' last o' them came back at neet; an' said Miss Daisy wur na to be heard o'."
- "I can fancy it. I can fancy how a man would look when his heart was broken. Well," said the young man, feverishly, "and afterwards?"
- "Then t' mester bade me set candles i' Miss Daisy's room; an' 'a wur there t' maist feck o' t' neet, looking at t' empty bed, an' nivver speaking. An' this morning 'a looked ten years older. I missed him fra

t'hoose at twelve o'clock; an' sin' then I hanna seen or heard o' him. Oh, my mester, my poor owd mester," cried the woman, breaking into sobs.

A great fear came into Clifford's mind, and turned him faint. "Sarah," he said, "has no one been to seek for him?"

"Jo Cowperthwaite went to t' foot o' t' Pillar; an saw nowt o' him. Jo's na t' lad I 'ud ha sent; but owd Chris Ritson wur over t' Fell to Grasmere. 'A 's back noo; an' I ha' been to Huntsman for him. In an hour, a' says, when 'a 's had supper an' rested, a'll away to look for t' mester on t' Pillar."

"Tell him that he'll find me there."

It seemed to Clifford that not more than a minute had gone by after his saying this, when in the cold moonlight he saw rise before him something that looked like an enormous tombstone—the precipitous summit of the Pillar Rock. "Oh," he muttered, stopping, and casting his eyes over that sombre column, "can it be possible that he was there to-day; and—and——?" As he

spoke, the moon passed suddenly behind a cloud. He thought that somewhere near him there must be a dead man's face; and that Nature was seeking to cover it with this darkness as with a shroud.

The moon had not long shone out again, when he caught sight of some glittering object lying high above him, on a ledge of rock a long way to the right. He climbed to the spot with some difficulty; and picked up a handsome oaken alpenstock. A silver plate had been let into the wood at one end; and by the light of the harvest moon he read, engraved upon it, "Presented by James Fleming to Anthony Clifford, Esq., the Patriarch of the Pillar, on his 80th birthday, July 10th, 1869." He shuddered; and let the staff drop from his hand upon the rock.

Close to him, the precipice went sharply down, for perhaps a couple of hundred feet. He dragged himself on hands and knees to the edge of this gulf, and looked haggardly down. For some moments his straining eyes saw only vacancy; then it seemed to

him as if he were kneeling, not on the verge of an abyss, but in front of the parted jaws of some abnormal monster; and that the jagged rocks he could dimly distinguish far below him were its teeth. He felt vertigo seizing him; and drew back.

At last some command of brain returned to him; and there was no longer either a fire before his eyes, or a roaring as of waters in his ears. He bent once more over the abyss; and, with the shuddering glance that one throws into a newly-opened grave, questioned it for its secret. And—as a skull might look up from a grave—there looked up at him from the depth below sightless eye-balls, and a white, dead face.

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